CONTEMPORARY FAMILIES IN THE US: AN EQUITY LENS 2E



Elizabeth B. Pearce
Linn-Benton Community College

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Dedication

To all learners who strive to understand their own relationship with privilege and oppression while listening and learning about the experience of others.

In memory of:

Sandra Angel Nelson

and

Dr. Alexis J. Walker

who were committed to creating a just society.

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Acknowledgments

I am grateful that *Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens* was included in the Open Oregon Educational Resources federal grant program to build multiple texts in the Human Development Family Sciences (HDFS) field. The leadership and support of Amy Hofer, Micheala Willi-Hooper, Veronica Vold, Phoebe Daurio, Michelle Culley, Matthew DeCarlo, Jonathan Poritz, Kimberly Puttman, Stephanie Lenox, Jenn Gardner, and the entire Open Oregon Educational Resources team has expanded and deepened the second edition of this text.

Students are at the core of this text. Alexis, Amy, Carla, Cassie, Christopher, Hannah, Jessica, Kate, Katie, Nyssa, Ruta, Shonna, and Wesley, the foundational student author group that leaped into the unknown, entered the liminal space between consumership and authorship of a college textbook. Current students dig deep into their own family experiences, even painful ones, to develop the themes and stories integrated into the text and in the Contemporary Families Open Pedagogy Portfolio. They take risks. They grow in their scholarship and build the foundation of this book. They make a difference in the experience of future learners.

The first edition was created on a much smaller budget but with many student, professional, and volunteer hours. Funding from Linn-Benton Community College (Albany, Oregon) and from Open Oregon Educational Resources provided the seeds, and many individuals contributed. My deepest gratitude goes to Steve Smith, Katie Winder, Nana Osei-Kofi, Chessie Alberti, Meg Roland, Isabelle Havet, Jane Sandberg, Terese Jones, Deron Carter, Karelia Stetz-Waters, Mark Weiss, Jane Waite, Bruce E. Thomson, Margarita Casas, Fay Stetz-Waters, Oriana Mulatero Ferraro, Andrew Douglas Campbell, Shelly Dermody, Bobbi Hall, and Lauren Visconti who contributed feedback and resources. Michaela Willi-Hooper and Lauren Antrosiglio volunteered leadership and skills that turned the Google documents into an accurate and eye-pleasing pressbook.

Thank you to Deron Carter and Colleen Sanders, who continue to foster the creativity and courage it takes to implement open pedagogy. They have supported the ongoing work of having students contribute to this textbook and the Contemporary Families Open Pedagogy Portfolio.

I appreciate the incredible ongoing support from my friends and family, who have not wavered during this five-year journey. Karelia Stetz-Waters continues to lend not only her friendship but also her professional expertise and insights into the writing process. And my partner, Liz Baker, continues to support this work.

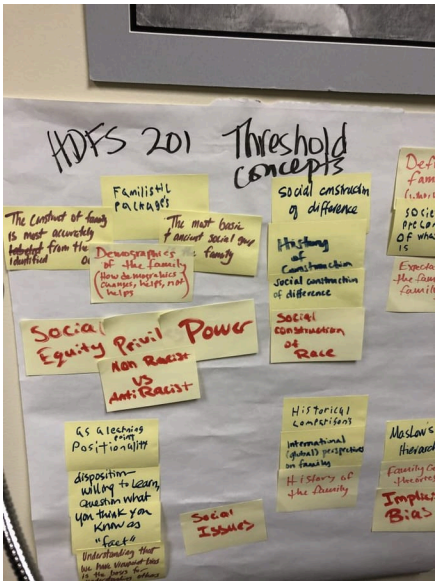


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Letter to Students

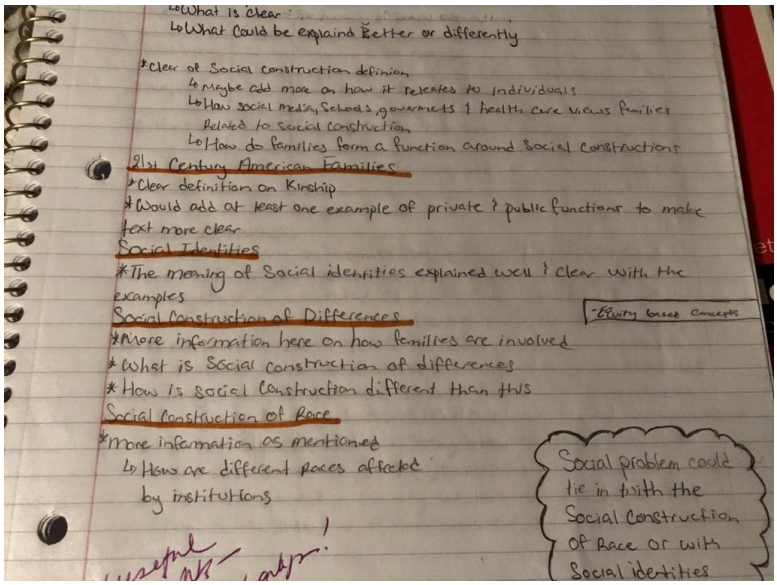
You are taking this class about today's families in remarkable times; an era that has and will change the experience of many students and families in the United States.

This text differs from commercial texts not just in its price (it's free!) but also in its approach. Emphasis is placed on social structure and the ways that power, privilege and oppression affect families. College students helped to create the foundation for this book. We aspire to include topics that are most meaningful to college students and their families.



We started writing this text just before the world shut down in March 2020; it originated with thirteen students from a wide range of disciplines who had taken the contemporary families course in the prior year. They generated the brainstorming list above/shown above which became the content in the very first chapter of this textbook. The second edition of this text has now gone through peer review by other college faculty, multiple editorial review, and multiple versions. After you read Chapter One, take a look back at their work. Do you see it reflected there?

The thirteen students who participated in the origination of this project have my utmost regard for their courage and their scholarship. Deep examination of institutionalized privilege, oppression and justice is challenging and painful. They brainstormed, questioned, researched, debated, outlined, drew, and wrote. Each one has their own personal connection to the needs of families and the inequities that families experience. They introduced and advocated for the inclusion of topics that have an immediate relevance to current students' lives.



The newest edition benefits from increased funding that has expanded such features as chapter learning objectives, activities, and reflective questions–additional resources for you, the learner. You will see the contributions of college faculty from multiple institutions: Oregon State University, Portland Community College, Saint Joseph's University, and Umpqua Community College. In addition, current Linn-Benton Community College students continue to contribute to subsections to the text. Recent additions written by LBCC students include the effects of lead paint, the obesity epidemic, how video games affect family dynamics, and the challenges faced by immigrant families at the southern border of the United States. In addition, current students have contributed to this Open Pedagogy Portfolio of student projects that are only licensed.

This textbook has been designed to engage you in deep thinking about families and society. The chapters average about two hours of reading, boxed "In Focus" features, and video content. Your actual engagement time will vary depending on how fast you read, and your schedule.

There is also a curated collection at the end of each chapter, "Going Deeper". This collection is not part of the required reading (unless your instructor has specifically assigned it) but is here for you to expand and explore topics of interest more deeply. It's a great place to look for ideas if you are asked to choose a course topic for an assignment.

This openly licensed text approaches contemporary families from an equity lens and asks the questions: "What do families need?" and " How do society and institutions support or get in the way of families getting what they need?" and "What changes can we initiate to create more equity amongst families?" In order to answer these questions, we continue to include the voices of students. I continue to ask "What matters most to students when it comes to family needs?" This has shaped the content of the book; it is a far different book than I would have written alone.

One of the best parts of an openly licensed digital text is that it is a living document. The authors invite you to be a part of the future of this text. We want to emphasize diversity of viewpoint, experience, social identity, and voice.When the time comes to revise this text, the suggestions of students will be considered. I hope you will reflect upon and question the content of the text. Ask yourself as you read:

- What could be added to the content that is important to today's families?
- What do you want to know more about?
- Are there features that you have seen in other textbooks that we could add and that would help you learn better?

I look forward to the future of this book, to its contribution to understanding inequities that families face, and the knowledge that it inspires us to advocate for and improve structures and society.



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About this Book

Accessibility Statement

This book was created in good faith to ensure that it will meet accessibility standards wherever possible, and to highlight areas where we know there is work to do. It is our hope that by being transparent in this way, we can begin the process of making sure accessibility is top of mind for all authors, adopters, students and contributors of all kinds on open textbook projects.

If you encounter an accessibility issue, please let your instructor know right away.

Equity Lens

The Open Oregon Educational Resources Targeted Pathways Project seeks to dismantle structures of power and oppression entrenched in barriers to course material access. We provide tools and resources to make diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) primary considerations when faculty choose, adapt, and create course materials. In promoting DEI, our project is committed to:

1. Ensuring diversity of representation within our team and the materials we distribute
2. Publishing materials that use accessible, clear language for our target audience
3. Sharing course materials that directly address and interrogate systems of oppression, equipping students and educators with the knowledge to do the same

Designing and piloting openly licensed, intersectional, and antiracist course materials is one starting point among many when addressing inequities in higher education. Our project invites students and educators to engage with us in this work, and we value spaces where learning communities can grow and engage together.

We welcome being held accountable to this statement and will respond to feedback submitted via our contact page.

Course Learning Outcomes

Educators, students, and future employers all benefit when course-level learning outcomes guide our shared work. When course-level learning outcomes are public, institutions demonstrate a commitment to equitable student success through the potential for increased collaboration and inclusive course design. This project analyzed learning outcomes across the state of Oregon to identify themes and commonalities. Authors used this analysis as a basis for developing course outcomes that could match the curriculum of multiple institutions in Oregon while still considering their local needs and context.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Use theoretical frameworks to interpret the nature of contemporary families, how family structures and roles have changed, and how they continue to change.
2. Describe how social structures such as the media, the economy, and public policies interact with family groups to contribute to the complexity of family outcomes.
3. Analyze current social issues, including the impact of historical and environmental influences, on family development.
4. Explain how difference is socially constructed.
5. Using historical and contemporary examples, describe how perceived differences, combined with unequal distribution of power across economic, social, and political institutions, result in inequity.
6. Analyze ways in which the interactions of social categories such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and age are related to difference, power, and oppression in the United States.

Pedagogical Foundations

The authors of this book embraced an equity-minded design for structure, scope, and sequence of chapters and chapter content. They sought to honor the needs and experiences of students who are often underserved in higher education in Oregon. Authors considered Transparency in Teaching and Learning (TILT), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Culturally Responsive

Teaching to design meaningful learning pathways for you. You will find rich images and multimedia in addition to written content. You will also find provocative discussion questions that align with learning outcomes and objectives.

Each chapter follows a similar pattern. Chapters begin with a reading guide that includes the purpose of the chapter, the chapter learning objectives, and a preview of key terms with their definitions. Reviewing the reading guide will help you be more focused and efficient in your learning.

The middle of every chapter contains three to six webpages, or sections of content. You'll notice the key terms will be hyperlinked with their definition the first time that they appear, and you will find a comprehension self-check and references at the end of each section.

Closing the chapter are two more sections: "Looking Ahead" and "Going Deeper". "Looking Ahead" is part of the regular chapter reading and focuses on a person, idea, or project that supports movements toward equity for families. "Going Deeper" is an optional section (unless required by your instructor) that contains curated videos, podcasts, readings, and activities all designed to help you explore the chapter or a specific topic more deeply. This would also be a good place to look if you are doing research for a class assignment, or have a choice of topics for an assignment. "Going Deeper" contains some of the author's favorite resources!

Instructors, please see the Instructor Resources section in the Back Matter for an overview of curriculum design as well as openly licensed course packs and teaching tools.

Language Inclusivity

As a part of our equity lens, we strive to be inclusive of all families, and to use language that is clear and accessible. We are doing our best to use terms that are preferred by diverse groups of people represented. But just like a family, groups are made up of many individuals, and choosing a term to use consistently will not be the first choice of everyone who shares that identity. Terms that were preferred 20 years ago, may be considered useless or offensive today.

Let's look at one example, terms that have been used and debated to describe people of Latin American cultural or ethnic identity in the United States. First, authors identity themselves as they choose with all identities. In cases where authors are describing a group of people who share this particular identity, there are four terms we've used:

- Latino
- Latino/a/x
- Latinx
- Latine

The authors spoke with scholars, students, and friends who consider themselves a part of this group. There are varying opinions and rationales for which term is "best". As of the publication of the second edition, we have used "Latine" in most cases, as it can include people of multiple genders, and is preferred by some Spanish speakers. In other cases, we used "Latino" because this is the term used by the U.S. government and other data sources. We have done our best to be inclusive and respectful.

This is just one example of our work to use vocabulary that is respectful to the people who own each identity. In some other cases, the American Psychological Association (APA) Style guidelines informed our choices, such as capitalizing racial and ethnic groups such as "Black" and "White".

We have also chosen to use the term "dominant culture" when discussing the predominant social structures in the United States. We use this term to signify the ways that these ideas influence what is seen as the "traditional" or "ideal" family form, and may devalue or stigmatize other family forms. We do not intend to imply that it should be dominant, merely that it permeates our society and our unconscious minds.

If you have questions about word choice, please talk about it with your peers and your instructor. These can be rich conversations that uncover diverse thinking about meaning, vocabulary, and diversity.

Triggering Topics

This book also touches on painful topics. Any book about families must examine the oppressive systems that have harmed families as well as painful interpersonal behaviors within families. As you read, pay attention to topics that may sadden, depress,

or “trigger” your feelings. Let your instructor know if you are having difficulty getting through a particular topic.

For the most part, we have not included specific “trigger warnings” with the understanding that the range of topics that can trigger any one person are quite different. But you will find that both Chapter Nine (Safety and Stability) and Chapter Fourteen (Meaning and Purpose) include deeper dives into subjects such as intimate partner violence, and system government violence toward families.

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Manuscript Development Process

This book went through an extensive pre-production process before it was launched in order to be accountable to the project's equity lens; revise drafts for quality; and incorporate feedback from scholars, practitioners, and students in the discipline.

Outline peer reviewers

- Norma Cardenas, Portland State University
- Martha Ochoa-Leyva, Portland Community College
- Erika Romine, Chemeketa Community College
- Marisol White, Bakersfield College
- Lisa Wormley, Central Oregon Community College
- Verna Zehner Ourada, Linn-Benton Community College and Western Oregon University

Manuscript peer reviewers

- Brittany Lynch, New York University
- Martha Ochoa-Leyva, Portland Community College
- Marisol White, Bakersfield College

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About the Authors

Elizabeth B. Pearce



Elizabeth aka Liz (she/her) is a faculty member who teaches Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) classes at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC). She has served as Department Chair, Faculty Fellow in Technology and Teaching, and as the Difference, Power, and Oppression Faculty Lead. Previously she directed the Family Resource Center, a full-time child care and parent cooperative for LBCC student and staff families. This textbook, mostly original work, originated in collaboration with LBCC students.

Her passion is creating opportunities and resources for transformative learning through open pedagogy in the community college classroom. She has presented locally, regionally, and nationally on this topic. She also leads and mentors faculty in equity-based teaching, active learning, technology use, and open pedagogy.

Liz earned a Bachelor of Arts in Child Study at Tufts University and a Master of Education degree in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has completed post-graduate coursework in child/family development, life course theory, educational policy, and sociology at Wheelock College (now Boston University) and Oregon State University. She is the author of *Introduction to Human Services* and a contributor to *Human Services Practicum: An Equity Lens* also published by Open Oregon Educational Resources.

Originating Authors: Linn-Benton Community College Students 2019-21

Christopher Byers

Christopher earned an Associate of Science degree from LBCC in June 2020 in Human Development and Family Sciences, Human Services option. Christopher helped start the Human Services Club at LBCC, was active in Student Government, and worked to acquire his Drug and Alcohol Counseling Certificate at Emergence Addiction & Mental Health Services. He went on to earn his Bachelors of Social Work and Masters of Social Work degrees from Portland State University.

Alexis Castaneda-Perez

Alexis Castaneda Perez is an alumnus of Oregon State University, where he graduated in 2023 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a minor in User Experience Research, through the Dual Partnership Program after joining LBCC in 2017. Outside of his academic pursuits, Alexis is passionate about playing guitar, reading, and biking on the trails around Corvallis.

Nyssa Cronin

Nyssa Cronin is a proud LBCC and Oregon State University alumnus with a Bachelor's of Science in Human Development and Family Sciences, emphasizing Human Services and minoring in Public Health. Her academic interests include the study of trauma and how that impacts individual, interpersonal, familial, and community health; and how systemic structures impact individuals based on their race, class, and gender. As an ally, she believes that education should be free to all; this book marks a step forward in that pursuit.

Cassie Cruze

Cassie is a working single parent who earned her A.S. degree in HDFS from LBCC in 2021. She worked on the Justice Chapter of this book. She is employed by the Lebanon Downtown Association; her favorite aspect is creating experiences for individuals and families to have lasting memories. She enjoys working alongside her children as they volunteer for community organizations that serve Linn and Benton Counties.

Shonna Dempsey

Shonna worked to earn her A.S. in HDFS from LBCC as a first generation college student, a full-time mother, and a part-time employee. Shonna worked on the Housing and Routines, Traditions, and Culture chapters, as well as the glossaries. She planned to obtain a bachelor's degree in social work or in HDFS. Shonna's dream job is to work with women coming out of addiction and domestic violence or at risk youth.

Ruta Faifaise

Ruta dual-enrolled at LBCC and OSU to work toward her degree in Human Development and Family Sciences. She was awarded the Oscar Humberto Montemayor Award at the 2020 Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration as a student who "embodies Oscar's ethos of selfless service; steady, strong, considerate leadership; and trailblazing spirit and heart."

Katherine Hemlock

Katherine Hemlock is a LBCC and Oregon State University HDFS graduate. Katherine enjoys writing and art, and contributed to the Housing chapter as well as creating several illustrations. She lives with her family in Albany, Ore., and is grateful to have a home and employment. They grow a diverse garden and landscape, and seek to learn more about the natural world.

Amy Huskey

Amy Huskey went back to school to pursue a career in public health after realizing the significant need to promote health for children and youth. This realization became evident through her volunteer work at her children's schools, where she noticed a link between social determinants of health, the conditions in which a person lives, and student achievement. Her goal is to develop strategies to improve academic outcomes by ensuring a solid foundation of health for under-resourced children and their families. Since the first edition of this textbook was published, Amy completed her coursework at LBCC. She transferred to Western Oregon University to complete a Public Health Bachelorette of Science degree with an expected graduation in the spring of 2024. Amy understands the difficulties of managing a family's demands, which helped bring the perspective of a parent to the student voices in this book.

Carla Medel

Carla Medel is a current Professional Counselor Associate in the state of Oregon and is actively working as a bilingual and bicultural mental health therapist. As a young Latinx woman who is also part of an immigrant family she found it extremely important to include the stories of people and families like hers in this book. Throughout this project she showed continuous motivation and drive to have future students see themselves reflected in academic learning materials as she did not get to experience that in her educational career. Carla continues to prioritize an equitable and systemic lens in her work as a therapist as this allows her to confront issues of oppression in the field of mental health.

Hannah Morelos

Hannah Morelos majored in Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) at LBCC with an emphasis in Human Services. She contributed to the Visual Culture chapter along with the Health chapter. After graduation from LBCC, Hannah earned a Bachelor of Science in Child, Youth and Family Studies (CYFS) from Portland State. While at PSU, Hannah interned with Our Children's Oregon, focusing on whole child well-being policies doing legislative and advocacy work. She has started her dream career of making an impact with the systems that affect young individuals at Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) Oak Creek female juvenile facility.

Katie Niemeyer

Katie Niemeyer is an aspiring artist who wants to see the world change for the better. When she took on this project, she had no idea what was in store for her but this project helped her learn and grow into the person she is today.

Wesley Sharp

Wesley Sharp majored in Human Services at LBCC. Wesley's main passion is avocation for socially disadvantaged groups mainly focusing on the LGBTQ+ community. He contributed to the Connection and Nurturance Chapters, as well as the Housing chapter. He hopes to eventually run a nonprofit organization on empowering and elevating queer youth as well as finding them safe and affirming living situations where there are none.

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Matt DeCarlo is the MSW Program Director and Clinical Assistant Professor at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pa. He earned his PhD in social work at Virginia Commonwealth University and his MSW from George Mason University. His research interests include education equity, labor rights, student wellness & basic needs, licensure examinations, and other workforce development initiatives for students and early-career social workers. He is the author of two free and openly licensed textbooks, Scientific Inquiry in Social Work and Graduate Research Methods in Social Work: A Project-Based Approach. Additionally, Matt is the co-founder of Open Social Work – a collaborative that advances knowledge equity in social work through open scholarly practices – open access, open education, and open science.

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Aimee Samara Krouskop, M.A. (she/her) teaches sociology at Portland Community College and provides consultation to leaders advancing social and environmental change. Her early research (1997-2000) focused on issues of human rights at the U.S.-Mexico Border with the University of Houston's Center for Immigration Research, and impacts of fair trade among Indigenous communities in Guatemala as a Fellow with the InterAmerican Foundation. Aimee's teaching and writing are informed by her professional work: in the U.S., on public participation and civil rights at the intersection of government, the private sector, and civil society; and in Latin America, on human rights protection and humanitarian assistance in conflict, post conflict, and emergency relief areas for grassroots resistance organizations as well as the United Nations. Aimee's current study and professional focus is in amplifying Indigenous knowledge, protecting Indigenous rights, and the value of both in defending and restoring our most vulnerable ecosystems.

Monica L. Olvera



Monica L. Olvera (she/her/ella), PhD, is an Instructor in Human Development and Family Sciences at Oregon State University. She is the faculty advisor for the student club Here To Stay, which supports and advocates for DACA students, undocumented students, and students with mixed immigration-status families. Her research focuses on Latina immigrant women's acculturation processes and positive youth development. In her free time, Monica enjoys spending time with family, riding horses in the Oregon forests, and reading.

Alexandra Olsen



Alexandra G. Olsen, Ph.D. (she/her), is currently a professor of sociology and human services at Umpqua Community College. She has a PhD and MA from University of California, Irvine in Sociology. Her past research has covered topics including adverse childhood experiences, harm reduction, changes in addiction treatment practices over time (including the development of trauma informed practices), and social change.

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Matt Bockheim graduated in 2023 from Oregon State University with a B.S. in mechanical engineering. He is currently working at PMIC Laboratory in Corvallis, Ore., as a project engineer, where he specializes in thermal conductivity testing and mechanical testing at cryogenic temperatures.

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Dominic Church was a student in the Environmental Justice (Geology 209) course at LBCC in Spring 2022.

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Heather Denherder earned her Associate Degree in Human Services from LBCC in 2020.

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Shyanti Marie Ku'ulei Franco, an alumna of Oregon State University (OSU) and LBCC, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Sciences and a minor in Psychology. The opportunity to contribute to "Chapter 4: Nurturance, Parenting, and Caregiving" of Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens fueled her compassion for youth and families affected by adversities. Shyanti volunteered with local non-profit organizations Jackson Street Youth Services and Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center as well as conducted research for OSU's Red Light, Purple Light: Self-Regulation Intervention Program. Shyanti continues to dedicate herself to humanities post-graduation as a Youth Development Professional at the Boys and Girls Club of Maui and as a Registered Behavior Technician for neurodivergent children within the Hawai'i Department of Education.

Laci Lourenzo

Laci Lourenzo is an alumni of Oregon State University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology. Laci is currently getting her master's degree at University of Utah to become a Certified Athletic Trainer. In her free time, Laci enjoys going for hikes, snowboarding, and spoiling her nieces and nephew.

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Emily Miller (she/her) is a student dual enrolled with Oregon State University and LBCC. She is majoring in Creative Writing with a minor in User Research Experience. She has grown up in Corvallis with her family and loves to play video games and read in her spare time.

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Genna Stern (she/her/hers) graduated with her A.S. Psychology emphasis from LBCC in December 2021, and her B.S. in Psychology from Oregon State University in March 2024. She is a member of the Psi Chi and Alpha Sigma Lambda honor societies, received the Drucilla Shepherd Smith Award in 2023, and is a Research Assistant for the OSU BEAVERS Lab. Genna plans to continue her education and aims to pursue a career in psychological research with a focus on food addiction and the impact of nutrition on mental health.

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Nadine M. Wood earned her M.S. in Health from Oregon State University. She is now retired after an eclectic work history including health education and promotion in both a university and private health care setting, marketing research assistant and data processing manager, and non-profit business manager. She lives in Western Oregon and enjoys many outdoor activities available in the Pacific Northwest.

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Instructor Resources

Author Message to Instructors:

After teaching courses on contemporary families for many years, I felt that there was another way to structure a textbook that might be more compelling to students. Working with a foundational group of 13 students from a variety of disciplines who had taken the course, we organized the textbook around the needs of families and how social structures support or hinder getting those needs met. This group helped identify historical gaps and erasures of families that they had noticed in other textbooks and helped to fill in those gaps.

Using an intersectional lens and placing the diversity of families at its core, the text prepares students with a range of majors and career paths to use their sociological imaginations, identify privilege and oppression, practice inclusion and take part in increasing equity for families, whether at the professional level, the personal level or both.

Recognizing that this is a new organizational structure for many who would like to use this textbook, we have created an important resource that will help you to identify topics such as “gender,” “race,” “union formation,” “parenting,” and so on. Because this textbook strives for diversity and inclusion, we have not isolated populations, social characteristics, or family structures to one chapter. Rather, we have threaded examples and stories through the textbook. This crosswalk provides faculty and students with the ability to find important topics that occur across multiple chapters.

Using this textbook will provide opportunities for students to see themselves as agents of change. Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens began with an open pedagogy project, and current students continue to create final projects that are used in the textbook and in the accompanying Contemporary Families Open Pedagogy Portfolio. Open pedagogy assignments are included in the Instructor Course Bank.

If you are looking for ways to create assignments directly from the textbook, the “Going Deeper” section does just that. Designed as an optional part of each chapter, it includes reflective questions that could be used for in-class discussions, reflective papers, or other assignments. In addition, every chapter has at least one activity. Also in this chapter are additional videos, podcasts, and readings that you might like to use in class or as assignments.

This textbook emphasizes communication of data and concepts through images as well as text. There are many graphs and illustrations created with universal design principles, as well as a series of videos focused on social identities and the social construction of difference.

I hope you will find that this book is as meaningful to your students as it is to the students at Linn-Benton Community College. With this organizational structure, the opportunity to contribute, and the incorporated visual tools, students are highly engaged. And they are grappling with and mastering the very complex aspects of difference, privilege and oppression and its interactions with families in the U.S.

Integrated Openly Licensed Course Materials

This book includes openly licensed course materials that fully integrate with the open textbook. Anyone can retain, revise, remix, reuse, and redistribute them. Best of all, future instructors can build on existing learning pathways that are aligned with textbook and chapter learning outcomes.

You can access openly licensed course materials in two ways:

- Contemporary Families in the U.S. Instructor Course Packs: A collection of aligned and accessible course materials shared by pilot instructors teaching at multiple Oregon institutions. Instructors designed each course pack with an equity lens in consultation with an instructional designer. In most cases, each course pack was revised with feedback from Oregon students and an advisory board of workforce members. Each course pack includes a complete course map, an instructor guide, and ancillary materials including weekly assignment prompts, rubrics, and suggested activities.
- Contemporary Families in the U.S. OER Commons Group: An ongoing repository of instructor-created course materials that integrate with the open textbook. Materials may include syllabi, assessments and assignments, lesson plans, activities, and entire course shells. Please note: not all OERC resources are reviewed for digital accessibility.

You are welcome to contribute your own openly licensed course materials that align with this textbook to the OERCommons Group. Thank you for building a more inclusive future for students and future educators!

Last Update

The first edition of this text, with its nine original chapters, was published by Linn-Benton Community College on September 25, 2020. This second edition has a number of exciting additions including five additional chapters. In addition we have added chapter objectives, H5P activities, and a “Going Deeper” section for every chapter that includes reflective questions, activities, and additional learning resources for students and faculty.

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Foreward- Nana Osei-Kofi

What would a nation of greater equitable social, economic, and political conditions mean for families in the United States? How might families be able to live if those who study families, those who create policies that shape the lives of families, and those who work with families, had the opportunity to engage with the content of the book you are currently reading? How can an equity lens contribute to critical thinking about families and the conditions they face? What can a justice-informed perspective reveal about what it means for all families to experience belonging, connection, and love? These are some of the many questions Liz Pearce and her students grapple with through this open educational resource (OER), freely available online.

As a result of an open pedagogy project, the community college students who co-authored this text offer readers content that is well-researched, deeply engaging, and thought-provoking. What they have accomplished through this project would not have been possible without bravery, dedication, and commitment to addressing the complexity of the many issues at hand. They have every reason to be very proud of what they have achieved.

As part of the Preface to this book, Liz Pearce discusses how coming to a deeper understanding of the ways in which power, privilege, and oppression overlap and shape life-conditions was life-altering for her. Hopefully, this book contributes to similar outcomes for students in classrooms across the United States and plays a part in creating a more equitable world for all families.

Nana Osei-Kofi, PhD

Director, Difference, Power, & Discrimination Program

Associate Professor, Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies

Oregon State University

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CHAPTER 1: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Learning Objectives

1. Define social construction.
2. Define social identities and social groups.
3. Contrast the social construction of difference with a social construction.
4. Explain how equity is different from equality and fairness.
5. Explore the relationship between social identities, intersectionality, and equity.
6. Analyze how the government affects the structure of kinship and family.
7. Describe family demographic trends in the United States.
8. Relate the historical context of families in the United States to the social construction of “the family.”

1.1: Chapter Reading Guide

1.2: The Family- A Socially Constructed Idea

1.3: A Historical Context for Today's Families

1.4: Social Identities, Social Constructions, and Families

1.5: The U.S. Government and Families

1.6: Looking Ahead- Social Structures and Kinship

1.7: Going Deeper

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1.1: Chapter Reading Guide

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce you to basic concepts that will support your goals in learning about families. You will also get an overview of the ways families are changing in the United States. As you read, do your best to relate these ideas to your own family experiences and observations. Some of the concepts may be familiar to you, while others will not be. But that's the point, right? You're here to learn about today's families in the United States, and these developmental and sociological trends are the first step.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Collectivist society:** a societal viewpoint that focuses on meeting the needs and goals of all members of a community, rather than focusing on individual successes.
- **Comparative approach:** within the fields of anthropology and sociology, the act of examining and contrasting social processes and institutions with a view to draw inferences and understand patterns.
- **Demographics:** statistical data about particular groups and changes in trends within the overall population.
- **Equity:** ensuring that people have what they need in order to have a healthy, successful life that is equal to others. Different from equality in that some may receive more help than others in order to be at the same level of success.
- **Individualistic society:** emphasizes the needs and success of the individual over the needs of a community.
- **Intersectionality:** an approach originally advanced by women of color that finds it critical to look at how identities and characteristics (such as ethnicity, race, and gender) overlap and influence each other to create complex hierarchies of power and oppression.
- **Kinship:** the social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships.
- **Nuclear family:** a family group that consists of two parents and their children living together in one household.
- **Private function of families:** focuses on the intimate relationships of family members. Being a part of a loving relationship that will last forever, or an indefinite amount of time, is seen as a core part of being a family member
- **Public function of families:** focuses on contributions to society such as the production of children or caring for others.
- **Separate spheres:** a binary, gender-based ideology that emerged during the industrial period that stated women were best suited for home and domestic work while men were best suited for public work.
- **Social characteristic:** describes traits that may be biologically determined and/or socially constructed. Examples include sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, first language, and religion.
- **Social construction:** meaning assigned to an object or event by mutual agreement (explicit or implicit) of the members of a society; can change over time and/or location.
- **Social construction of difference:** hierarchical value assigned to perceived differences between one socially constructed idea and another. Class, race, and other hierarchies based on social identity are social constructions of difference.
- **Social identity:** a person's sense of self as defined by and in relation to the combination of social characteristics, roles, and groups to which they belong.
- **Social structure:** the organization of institutions within society; this affects the ways individuals and families interact together.
- **Standard North American Family (SNAF):** a family group that consists of two parents and their children living together in one household.

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1.2: The Family- A Socially Constructed Idea

To begin our study of contemporary families in the United States, we will first define an important concept that is used for a large portion of this book: social constructions. A **social construction** is a mutual understanding and accepted reality created by members of a society rather than determined by biology or the natural world.

Is there anything that humans have created that holds no real value in the natural world, yet has a great deal of value assigned to it? If you are thinking of cash, you're right on the money (figure 1.1). Humans have determined that certain pieces of paper and metal objects are worth an agreed-upon value. One of the ways that we can tell money is a social construction is that it varies from culture to culture and over time. When you visit another country, the United States dollar bill has to be "exchanged" for money that has a different appearance and value.



Figure 1.1. Social constructions create meaning that is shared among members of society. Photograph by Jason Leung. License: Unsplash License.

Social constructions also relate to behavior and activities. For example, what food would you expect to see on the menu when you go out for breakfast in the United States? What if the eating place were described as a "Mexican" restaurant? And what if you traveled to another country, like Korea? What is eaten for breakfast varies from culture to culture and even from person to person. And yet, in general, we have a socially constructed idea of what is typically breakfast food in the United States: eggs, bacon, cereal, toast, and fruit, but not vegetables, noodles, pinto beans, or hot dogs.

One of the ways that you can recognize that something is a socially constructed idea is that it differs from place to place and changes over time. In addition, whatever is part of the socially constructed idea (in this case, what typical breakfast foods are) becomes "the norm" or what is expected. While we might welcome trying some different foods for breakfast, they are not seen as the typical or expected American breakfast foods (figure 1.2).



Figure 1.2. A breakfast taco; eggs, bacon, strawberries, and a sweet potato rosti; and steamed buns represent a variety of breakfasts that are common around the world. "Breakfast Burrito" by JBrazito. License: CC BY-NC 2.0. "Sunday Brunch: Sweet Potato Rosti, Bacon, Fried Egg & Strawberries" by SaucyGlo. License: CC BY 2.0. "Chinese Breakfast" by Daniel Y. Go. License: CC BY-NC 2.0.

What does this have to do with families? While studying families, we must continually remind ourselves that the idea of the family, and in particular the internalized belief that there is a "normal family," is a social construction. What is a normal family? I suspect that we can each paint a picture in our heads based on the years we have been exposed to portrayals of families in institutions such as the media, schools, government, and health care.

Generally, the traditional American family has been identified as the **nuclear family**, most often represented as a male-and-female heterosexual married couple who is middle class, White, and with several children. When society or the individuals within a society designate one kind of family to be traditional, this may imply a value, or a preference, for this family structure with these particular **social characteristics**, which are the traits that are biologically determined and/or socially constructed. Examples include sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, first language, and religion.

The nuclear family is sometimes called the *Leave It to Beaver* family after the popular sitcom television show that ran from 1957 until 1963 (figure 1.3, left). A more current popular sitcom, *Modern Family*, which concluded its 11th and final season in 2020, features this traditional family as well, but it also includes two other families that feature people of other ethnic groups and a same-sex couple (figure 1.3, right). Together, they form an extended family living in the same town. It is important to note, however, that our culture continues to emphasize the upper-middle-class White family image.





Figure 1.3 TV families in the 1950s and today. Figure 1.3. *Modern Family* photograph © American Broadcasting Company. License: Fair Use. Adaptations: juxtaposed with *Leave it to Beaver* photograph, which is in the public domain.

Equity, Equality, and Fairness

You will notice that this text often refers to equity rather than equality or fairness. We define **equity** as everyone having what they need, acknowledging that systemic inequities have affected people differently, and working to ensure that all members of society have access to the same opportunities and outcomes. The drawing in figure 1.4 illustrates the difference between equity and equality. Take a few minutes to view different variations of this concept as memes on social media.

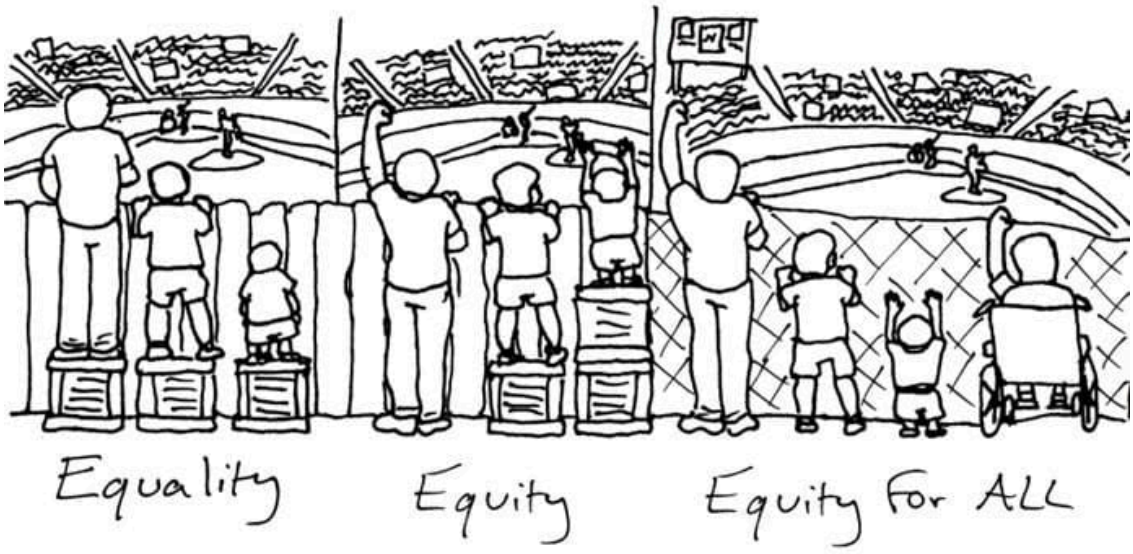


Figure 1.4 Equity means giving some people more (like an additional box to stand on) so that they can have the same experience. Barriers are removed to create true equity for all. "Equality, Equity, Equity for All" by Katie Niemeyer. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on ideas originally illustrated by Angus Maguire and Craig Froehle.

All families need equitable resources, but sometimes, experiences and structures get in the way. In the first panel of the drawing, all participants have equal-sized boxes, but they do not all get to have an equal experience. In the second drawing, the participants can have the viewing experience because the boxes have been equitably distributed. In the third panel, the structure that limited equitable access in the first place—the fence—has been removed so that all participants can view the game without additional resources.

In this text, we study American families with an emphasis on the current inequities in the United States. To help us understand the socially constructed nature of our view of the family and the systems that affect families, we take a **comparative approach** (American Sociological Association, 2020). This means that, while our focus is current American families, we will also look at how families have evolved in America, what the practices are of immigrant cultures in America, and how other countries develop systems that affect families. We also utilize empirical research, which refers to data that are collected in a variety of ways, analyzed, and presented to further our understanding.

21st-Century American Families

Scholars, as well as the general public, have multiple viewpoints about the meaning of families within society. While families have evolved, so have the ways each of us thinks about our own family, as well as how we think about how families should and could interact within themselves and with **social structures** (the organization of institutions within society); this affects the ways individuals and families interact together.

While we are studying families, it is important to note the concept of **kinship**, the social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships. While definitions vary, it is widely agreed that the term kinship is broader than the term family. Kinship acknowledges that individuals have a role in defining who is a member of their own family and how familial relationships extend across society.

What are families in the United States like today? Because we are constrained by both our personal experiences and the societal representations of "typical families," it is important to talk about what kinds of kinship structures and changes are actually occurring. At times, the study of families has been referred to as the study of "the family." This text avoids that terminology

because we are studying many types of families.

In order to describe current American families and kinship structures, it is probably easiest to compare them with families of the past and families in other countries. **Demographics**—statistics related to populations and designated social characteristics—help us to understand how identities and family structures are related. Let's see what some of the biggest trends are in terms of family structure. The following graphs and descriptions give a snapshot of demographic changes over time and current kinship patterns:

Changes in Children's Living Arrangements

Increases in children living with a single parent and with cohabiting parents between 1960 and 2014 are shown in figure 1.5. This chart illustrates the changes in partnering and parenting arrangements that adults have made and the ways they affect where children live. Right away, you can see that there is no longer a "typical" kind of parenting arrangement but rather a range of ways that people parent and create families.

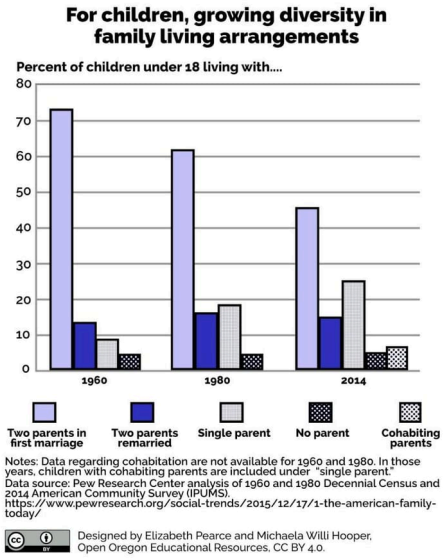


Figure 1.5. This chart shows a growing diversity in family living arrangements. Data from Pew Research Center. Image description. Figure 1.5. "For Children, Growing Diversity in Family Living Arrangements" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on data from Pew Research Center.

Data for cohabitation was not available in 1960 and 1980 but was added in the 2014 data; children living with cohabiting parents in 1960 and 1980 were included in the group "single parents." Can you think of any other parenting arrangements that could be added to data collected in the 2020s?

Declining Marriage

People in the United States are marrying later in life, and the number of people who never marry is also increasing. This leads to a trend called "declining marriage." The share of adults 18 and older who have never married has increased from 17% in 1970 to 31% in 2021 (Mandapat et al., 2023). Figure 1.6 shows the increase for both men (blue) and women (red) in the median age of first marriage between 1890 and 2022. Consider family and friends that you know who are married. How similar or different are they from the trends shown?

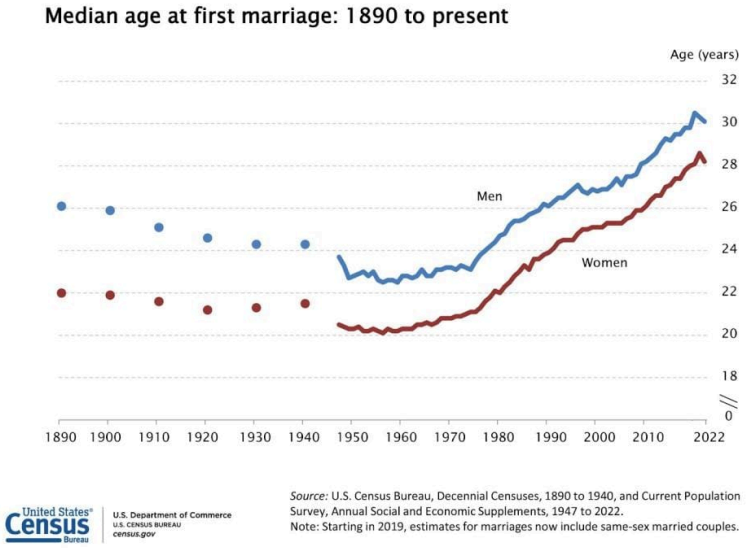


Figure 1.6. A U.S. Census Bureau graph showing the age of first marriages going up since the 1950s. Image description. Figure 1.6. "Median Age at First Marriage: 1890–Present" by the U.S. Census Bureau. Public domain.

At the same time, some kinds of marriage are increasing. For example, between 1970 and 2022, the percentage of people who marry interracially and interethnically (together called "intermarried") has increased from 4% to 16% (Mandapat et al., 2023). And since same-sex marriage became legal in 2015, these marriages have increased from 0.7% to 1.1% in 2022.

Declining Divorce

Although you may often hear that the divorce rate is increasing, it has actually been declining since 1990. But remember, that marriage is declining as well! In the chart in figure 1.7, you can see that the marriage rate (red) is declining a bit faster than the divorce rate (white), which is one of the factors that makes it appear as if divorce is increasing. It's actually declining, just at a slower rate than marriage itself is declining.

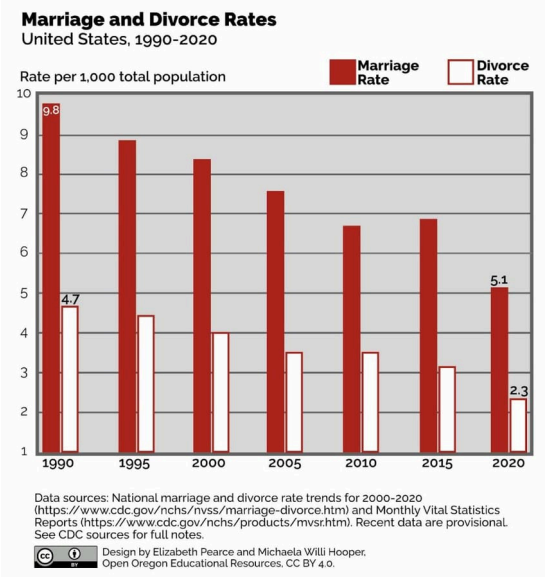


Figure 1.7. Marriage and divorce rates have gone down since the 1990s. Data from Statistical Abstract based on the U.S. Census. "Marriage and Divorce Rates United States, 1990–2020" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0. Data from National Marriage and Divorce Rate Trends for 2000–2020 and the Monthly Vital Statistics Reports, CDC. Recent data are provisional. See sources for full notes. Image description

In Chapter 3, which focuses on the intimate relationships that people form with one another, we will look at both marriage and

divorce rates more closely.

Declining Fertility Rates and Birth Rates

There are fewer babies being born in the United States. The decline is measured following the “Baby Boom” years between approximately 1946 and 1964, as shown in figure 1.8.

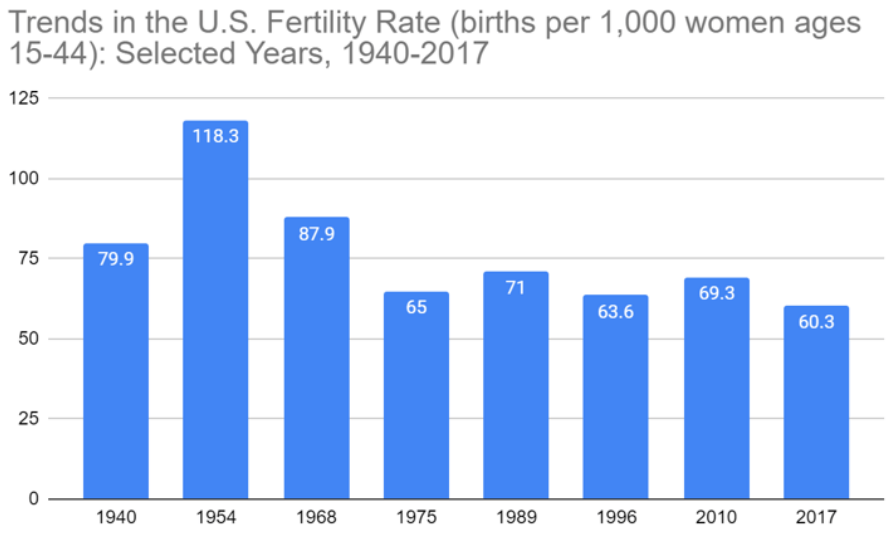


Figure 1.8 Fertility rates in the United States have declined since peaking in 1954. “Trends in the U.S. Fertility Rate.” License: CC BY 4.0. Based on data compiled by childtrends.org.

There are several factors that contribute to these declining rates, including the fact that people who want to have children are less likely to be able to have children. Why is this? We will look at related social, economic, and biological factors in Chapter Four.

Multigenerational Households

Multigenerational living includes families with two or more adult generations living together, as well as families that have grandchildren under age 25 and grandparents living together. Figure 1.9 illustrates the trend of multigenerational living in the United States (Pew Research, 2018).

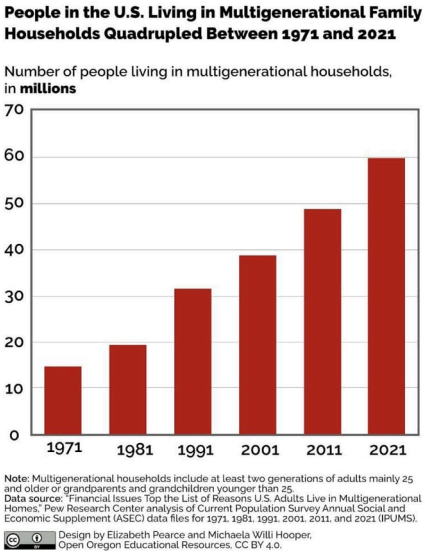


Figure 1.9. The number of Americans who live in multigenerational households continues to increase. This graph is based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the 2000–2016 American Community Survey. "One in Five Americans Live in a Multigenerational Household" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on data from "Financial Issues Top the List of Reasons U.S. Adults Live in Multigenerational Homes," Pew Research Center analysis of Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) data files for 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011, and 2021 (IPUMS). Image description.

This style of living hit a low of 12% of all families in the United States in 1980. Since then, multigenerational living has increased in most racial and ethnic groups, age groups, and genders. What factors do you think may have contributed to this increase?

Longer Working Lives

Beneficial trends such as longer life expectancy and being healthier longer affect people's decisions to work longer. Less beneficial trends such as concern about having adequate health care coverage, fewer jobs offering associated pensions, and the increasing number of workers who have multiple part-time jobs also affect this trend. These factors, along with the increases in the cost of living, have contributed to the middle class shrinking.

The graph in figure 1.10 shows differentiation by gender and by education level, but there is also differentiation related to wealth, income, and kind of employment. Look at the difference between 1992 (light blue, left) and 2004 (red, right). Notice that for both genders and with all education levels, people are expecting to work longer.

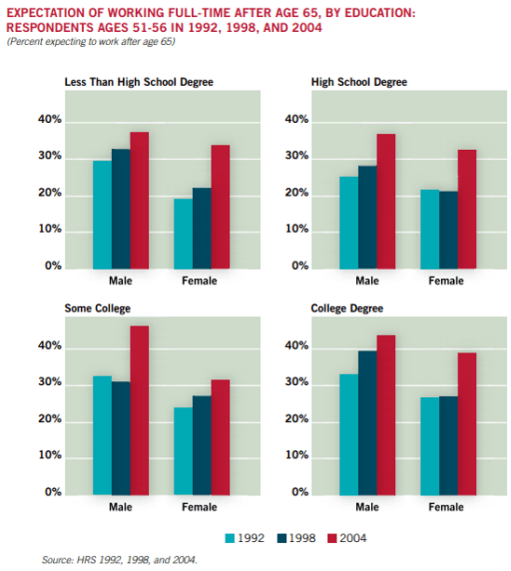


Figure 1.10. People are expecting to work longer. Evidence shows that people actually are working longer as well. Figure 1.10. "Expectation of Working Full Time after Age 65" from the Health and Retirement Study by the National Institute on Aging. Public domain.

The number of older workers increased between 11% in 1987 to 19% in 2023 (Braga, 2023). This is similar to the levels of older workers in the 1960s. Expectations do not always match experience, and there is some evidence that older workers are forced out of stable, well-paying jobs at a significant percentage, as you can see in figure 1.11.

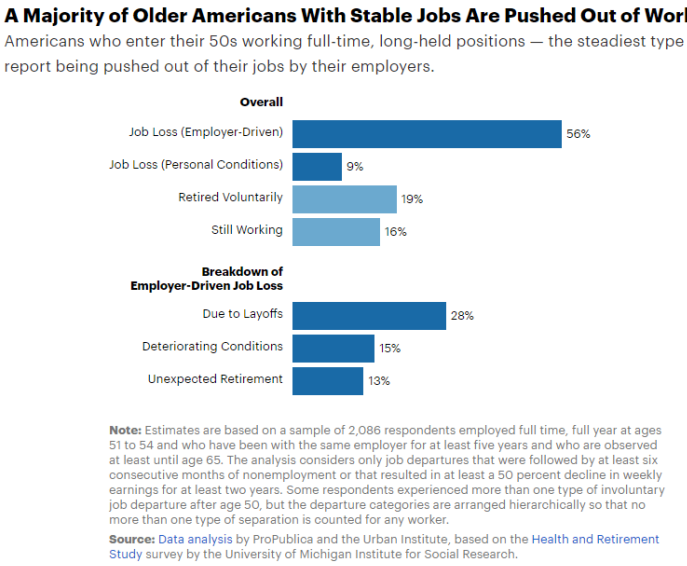


Figure 1.11. The results of a 2018 survey conducted by ProPublica of 2,086 people aged 51 to 54 years showed that many people retired even though they didn't want to (Gosselin, 2018). "A Majority of Older Americans with Stable Jobs Are Pushed Out of Work" by Peter Gosselin/ ProPublica. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Older workers are also earning higher wages than they did in previous generations. Younger workers still earn more, but the gap is closing. For comparison, in 1964 the average annual income of workers aged 65 and older was 19% of the average income for people aged 24 to 64 years. By 2023, the average annual earnings of older workers were 80% of the earnings of younger workers (Braga, 2023).

Theoretical Perspectives on Families

In this text, the authors describe multiple accepted theories and perspectives, with an effort to include diversity of thinking. These theories don't necessarily conflict with one another. Rather, they offer different views of how families interact within themselves

and within society.

Family as Haven, Fulfillment, and Encumbrance

Sociologist Maxine Baca Zinn examines the ways that ideas and images of families influence family expectations and interactions. Specifically, she describes family as haven, family as fulfillment, and family as encumbrance (Zinn et al., 2011).

The family as haven describes the historical contrast between home spaces and workspaces in the United States. The idea that we live in a "heartless world" where individuals cannot expect to be treated with compassion isolates those caring characteristics from the home and family. The family became the place of warmth, tenderness, and morality in contrast to a world of commerce and competition, especially as society became more industrialized. It became a place where protection was offered.

The idea of family as fulfillment emerged in the later part of the 20th century as expectations increased for individual family roles as well as the home and family environment. For example, more intensive parenting to raise well-developed children became more idealized and was seen as fulfilling for parents. In addition, the family as a whole was not seen just as an escape from the harsh world but also as a place for enjoyment, creating meaning, and rejuvenation.

The family as encumbrance recognizes the ways in which the family ideals encompass responsibilities, effort, and stagnation. Monogamous marriage and parenting can be monotonous. This can get in the way of self-actualization and freedom to have the fullest experience of self. While both the family as fulfillment and as encumbrance incorporate the societal ideals of reaching one's full potential, they represent two differing ways that the family can be viewed and experienced.

The Private and Public Functions of Families

Sociologist Andrew Cherlin uses the lens of private and public functions to view families. Notably, American society today is more concerned with the **private function** of families, which focuses on the intimate relationships of family members. Being a part of a loving relationship that will last forever, or an indefinite amount of time, is seen as a core part of being a family member (Cherlin, 2016).

In the past, and today in other cultures and countries, families focused more on the **public function**, such as the production of children, who could contribute to the well-being of both the family and society. This perspective is similar to what would be called "public goods" (or the products produced and used by the public) in an economic model. The most common public good in American families is our children, but caring for the elderly or adults with disabilities could also be considered a public good. Volunteering and contributing to places of worship, charitable organizations, and other nonprofit agencies is another way to perform the public function.

As public institutions, families support, contribute to, and benefit from the overall **social structure**, which describes the organization of institutions within a society and affects the ways individuals and families interact. Although our society currently focuses on the private function, families implicitly perform both; these functions are complementary to one another. In this text, we will raise awareness of the public function.

The focus on the private function of families and on self-actualization as an important part of life may relate to the United States' identity as an **individualistic society** (Morin, 2019). In America, there is a focus on what individuals can achieve, with value placed on accomplishments that are gained without the support of society. Many other countries have **collectivist societies** that emphasize social support for all so that all members of the group are able to meet their goals and needs.

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1.3: A Historical Context for Today's Families

Once upon a time, single-parent and same-sex families did not exist, or so the popular television shows and movies of past decades would have us believe. Neither did interracial couples, mothers working outside the home, couples deciding not to have children, or other family forms and situations that are increasingly common today. Domestic violence and child abuse were not widely discussed or acknowledged publicly. However, other family forms and situations also existed then, though they have become more visible, more accepted, and perhaps more common today.

The "Nostalgia Trap"

In contrast to idealized images of the past, we now hear that parents are too busy working at their jobs to raise their kids properly. We hear of kids living without fathers because their parents either are divorced or were never married in the first place. We hear of young people having babies, using drugs, or committing violence.

We hear that the breakdown of the nuclear family, the entrance of women into the labor force, and the growth of single-parent households are responsible for these problems. Some observers urge women to work only part-time or not at all so they can spend more time with their children. Some yearn wistfully for a return to the 1950s, when everything seemed so much better and easier. Children had what they needed back then: one parent to earn the money and another parent to take care of them full time until they started kindergarten, when this parent would be there for them when they came home from school.

Families have indeed changed, but this yearning for the 1950s falls into the "nostalgia trap" (Coontz, 2000). The 1950s television shows did depict what *some* families were like back then, but they failed to show what many other families were like. Moreover, the changes in families since that time have probably not had the harmful effects that many observers allege. It is more likely that the challenges that many families face today have more to do with economic change; increasing levels of poverty; and systemic racism, sexism, and other "isms."

Much of this text focuses on uncovering systemic forces that interact with family life. In fact, historical and cross-cultural evidence suggests that the *Leave It to Beaver*–style family of the 1950s was a relatively recent and atypical phenomenon and that, given equitable access to resources, many other types of families can thrive just as well as those 1950s television families did.

Defining Family

Many family forms exist in the United States and throughout the world. When we try to define the word "family," we realize just how slippery of a concept it is.

The dominant ideology of what constitutes a family in the United States was a very class- and race-specific type of gendered family formation (figure 1.12). This family formation has been labeled the **Standard North American Family (SNAF)** and is defined as:

> A conception of the family as a legally married couple sharing a household. The adult male is in paid employment; his earnings provide the economic basis of the family-household. The adult female may also earn an income, but her primary responsibility is to the care of the husband, household, and children. Adult male and female may be parents (in whatever legal sense) of children also resident in the household (Smith 1993).



Figure 1.12. Defining families with a “family ideal” is harmful to other families and to the social structure that supports families. “Family Ideal” by bykst is in the Public Domain, CC0.

When we put the SNAF into a historical perspective, we are able to see how this dominant family formation is neither natural nor outside of the politics and processes of race, class, and gender inequality. The SNAF originated in the 19th century with the separation between work and family, and it was occasioned by the rise of industrial capitalism (Cott, 2000; Coontz, 2005).

While it can be desirable to develop criteria for a definition, these criteria deny the importance and existence of many kinship formations such as single parents, stepparents, extended family, and other kinship relationships. It also excludes what Kath Weston (1991) has labeled “chosen families,” or how queer people who are ostracized from their families of origin form kinship ties with close friends. The diversity of family formations across time and place tells us that the definition of a “family” tends to favor specific traits and devalue others. It reproduces an ideology of “the family” that obscures the diversity and reality of family experiences (Gerstel, 2003).

Traditional definitions of families also exclude those who consider each other family but cannot or do not live in the same household, often for economic reasons. This includes transnational families—for example, South or Central American parents leaving their country of origin to make wages in the United States and send them back to their families. Transnational families are common in the United States, partly because immigration laws have historically limited immigration to people who can obtain employment, and families are divided temporarily or permanently. The Great Recession (2009 to 2014) also separated families who had been living together in the United States, sometimes across the country and sometimes between nations.

Other families who live apart also include families with a member who is incarcerated. People who are imprisoned represent a significant portion of the population in the United States. Although the rate of prison incarceration has slowly been falling since 2008, the United States incarcerates a larger share of its own population than any other country (Gramlich, 2021).

This population includes parents: “Parents held in the nation’s prisons—52 percent of state inmates and 63 percent of federal inmates—reported having…minor children, accounting for 2.3 percent of the U.S. resident population under age 18” (Sabol & West, 2010). That means that more than 2% of children in the United States have a parent incarcerated.

Preindustrial Period

The industrial economy evolved in the United States between 1750 and 1850. Prior to an economy based on the creation of commodities in urban factories, the family was primarily an agricultural work unit—there was no separation between work and home. People in foraging societies, sometimes called hunter-gatherer groups, probably lived in small groups composed of several nuclear families. These groupings helped ensure that enough food would be found for everyone to eat.

While men tended to hunt and women tended to gather food and take care of the children, both sexes’ activities were considered equally important for a family’s survival. Many Native American societies during this time were even matriarchal in nature.

Plant food and livestock were abundant, and families' wealth and well-being depended on fertile land and the size of herds. Because men were more involved than women in herding, they acquired more authority in families, and families became more patriarchal than previously (Quale, 1992). Still, families continued to be the primary economic unit of society until industrialization. Colonization of Indigenous people altered family structure via the emphasis on patriarchy. The nuclear family that was so popular on television shows during the 1950s was much less common during the preindustrial period (figure 1.13).

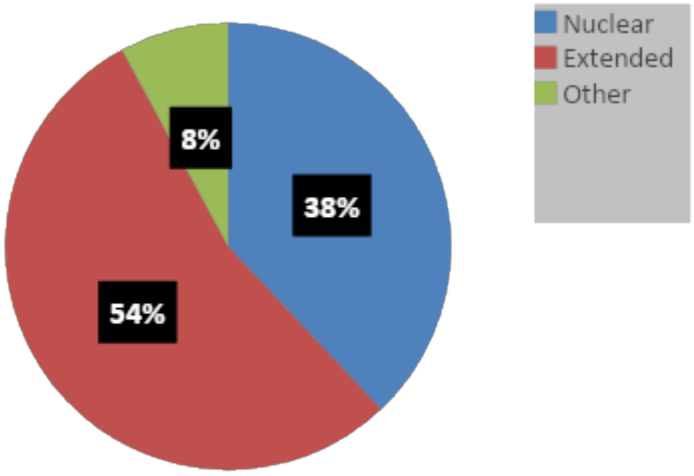


Figure 1.13. This graph shows the main kinds of families in preindustrial societies. Data from Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. "Types of Families in Preindustrial Societies" is from Defining the Family in Exploring our Social World: The Story of Us by Jean Ramirez, Rudy Hernandez, Aliza Robison, Pamela Smith, and Willie Davis. License: CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Colonization refers to two structural activities in the United States. The first was the colonization of North America by European countries attempting to increase their power and wealth. This period ended with the incorporation of the 13 existing colonies into the United States of America following the American Revolutionary War, sometimes called the War for Independence, which ended in 1783.

Colonization also refers to the actions that the colonies and then the newly incorporated states took to increase their power, influence, and wealth. This included moving Native Americans off of their homelands to less fertile areas and creating boarding schools for their children that broke up families and destroyed Indigenous languages and culture. In addition, colonists enslaved African people who were brought to this country against their will, treating them as objects and separating families.

During this time, nomadic Native American groups had relatively small nuclear families, while groups that were more stationary had larger extended families; in either type of society, however, "a much larger network of marital alliances and kin obligations [meant that] no single family was forced to go it alone" (Coontz, 1995). The U.S. institution of legalized slavery, which lasted from the country's founding until 1865, made it difficult for enslaved African Americans to maintain nuclear families. Enslavers frequently sold children and broke apart families to increase their profits. Enslaved people adapted by developing extended families, adopting orphans, and taking in other people not related by blood or marriage.

Industrialization

With the rise of industrial capitalism between 1750 and 1850, working-class families and families of color (who had been denied access to union jobs or were still enslaved) needed to have all the adults and children go to work. The majority of family members—including children and women—worked in factories or domestic labor, serving middle-class and wealthy families.

Middle-class families who had inherited property and wealth—the vast majority of whom were White—did not need all the members of their families to work. They were able to pay for their homes; hire house servants, maids (who were primarily African American or immigrant women of color), and tutors; and send their children to private educational institutions with the salary of the breadwinning father, who provided the financial means for himself and his family. Also sometimes referred to as "family-wage jobs," jobs that could support an entire family were more common during this time period than they are now.

Thus, the gendered division of labor—wherein women perform unpaid care work within the home and men are salaried or wage-earning breadwinners—that is sometimes assumed to be a logical organization of family life is a relatively recent economic invention that privileged middle-class White families. In these families, women stayed at home to take care of children and do

household chores and were paid nothing (Gottlieb, 1993). For this reason, men's incomes increased their patriarchal hold over their families.

In poor, immigrant, and many Black families, women continued to work outside the home. Because families now had to buy much of their food and other products instead of producing them themselves, the standard of living actually declined for many families.

This false split between the publicly oriented working father and the privately oriented domestic mother produced the ideologies of **separate spheres** and the cult of domesticity, which celebrated women's roles as mothers and homemakers. The ideology of separate spheres held that women and men were distinctly different creatures with different natures and therefore suited for different activities. Masculinity was equated with breadwinning, and femininity was equated with homemaking (figure 1.14).



Figure 1.14. The idealized White middle-class woman equated domesticity with femininity but failed to account for the poor, immigrant, Black, or other marginalized people who were most often servants or helpers in middle-class homes. This work by ArtsyBee is in the Public Domain, CC0.

Likewise, the cult of domesticity was an ideology about White womanhood that held that White women were asexual, pure, moral beings properly located in the private sphere of the household. Importantly, this ideology was applied to all women as a measure of womanhood. The effects of this ideology were to systematically deny working-class White women and women of color access to the category of "woman" because they had to work and earn wages to support their families.

Furthermore, during this period, coverture laws legally defined White married women as the property of their husbands. Upon marriage, a woman's legal personhood was dissolved into that of the husband. They could not own property or sign or make legal documents, and any wages they made had to be turned over to their husbands. Thus, even though they did not have to work in factories or the fields of plantations, White middle-class women were systematically denied rights and personhood under coverture. In this way, White middle-class women had a degree of material wealth and symbolic status as pure, moral beings, but it came at the cost of their legal personhood.

Early and Mid-20th Century

Medical, automotive, and technical advances led to many women entering the workforce in the 1920s, primarily in office jobs, and the Great Depression of the 1930s led even more women to work outside the home. During the 1940s, a shortage of men in shipyards, factories, and other workplaces because of World War II led to a national call for women to join the labor force to support the war effort and the national economy. They did so in large numbers, and many continued to work after the war ended. One of the most iconic images from this period is Rosie the Riveter, which came from an ad campaign to recruit women into defense industry jobs during the war (figure 1.15).



Figure 1.15. This popular poster exemplifies the power that women experienced and demonstrated during World War II. "Rosie the Riveter" is by the National Archives Catalog from https://catalog.archives.gov/id/535413 and is unrestricted in the public domain.

But as men came home from Europe and Japan, books, magazines, and newspapers exhorted women to have babies, and babies they did have: people got married at younger ages, and the birth rate soared, resulting in the now-famous Baby Boom generation. Meanwhile, divorce rates dropped. The national economy thrived as automotive and other factory jobs multiplied, and many families for the first time could own their own homes. Suburbs sprang up, and (mostly White) middle-class families—moved to them; they did indeed fit the *Leave It to Beaver* model of the breadwinner-homemaker suburban nuclear family (Skolnick, 1991).

Even so, less than 60% of American children during the 1950s lived in these breadwinner-homemaker nuclear families (Coontz, 2000). Teenage pregnancy rates were about twice as high as today, although more pregnant teens were already married or decided to get married because of the pregnancy. Although not as publicly acknowledged back then, alcoholism and violence in families were present. Historians have found that many women in this era were unhappy with their homemaker roles, chafing against what would come to be called the "feminine mystique"—the idea that women could and should be satisfied in the roles of wife, homemaker, and mother (Friedan, 1963).

In the 1970s, the economy finally worsened. Home prices and college tuition soared much faster than family incomes, and women began to enter the labor force as much out of economic necessity as out of simple desire for fulfillment. More than 60% of married women with children under six years of age were in the labor force, compared to less than 19% in 1960 (Coontz, 1997). Working mothers were no longer a rarity.

Postmodernism emerged as a theory that explains changing behavior in the late 20th century. The postmodern theory emphasizes individuality and choice. When this is applied to family life, we can see that the majority of families in the United States now do not fit into one particular structure. The multiple and numerous differences in the ways in which people structure their families today can be called postmodern families (Stacey, 1998).

The highly gendered nuclear family model popularized in the 1950s must be considered a blip in U.S. history rather than a long-term model. At least up to the beginning of industrialization and, for many families after industrialization, women, as well as men, worked to sustain the family. "American families always have been diverse, and the male breadwinner-female homemaker, nuclear ideal that most people associate with 'the' traditional family has predominated for only a small portion of our history" (Coontz, 1995). It can be said that rather than thinking of the 1950s as the last era of family normality, it is actually the 1950s that deviated from the norm of diverse families over time (Skolnick, 1991).

How Policies Define Family

The dominant historical ideology of the SNAF is reinforced by present-day law and social policy. For example, when gay men and lesbians have children, they often rely on adoption or assisted reproductive technologies, including in vitro fertilization or surrogacy (where a woman is contracted to carry a child to term for someone else), among other methods. Because laws in most states assume that blood ties between mother and child supersede non-biological family relations, gay men and lesbians who

seek to have children and families face barriers to legal parenthood.

Social policies often assume not only that the nuclear heterosexual family is a superior family structure but also that its promotion is a substitute for policies that would seek to reduce poverty. For instance, both the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama promoted marriage and the nuclear family as a poverty reduction policy. These programs have targeted poor families of color in particular. In the Healthy Marriages Initiative of 2004, President Bush pledged $1.5 billion to programs aimed at "marriage education, marriage skills training, public advertising campaigns, high school education on the value of marriage and marriage mentoring programs...[and] activities promoting fatherhood, such as counseling, mentoring, marriage education, enhancing relationship skills, parenting, and activities to foster economic stability" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009).

Such policies ignore the historical structural sources of racialized poverty and blame the victims of systemic classism and racism for problems that they did not create. As the history of the SNAF shows, the normative family model is based on a White middle-class model—one that a majority of families in the United States do not fit.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=815#h5p-5

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1.4: Social Identities, Social Constructions, and Families

In this section we will start by exploring social identities. Then, we will analyze the ways that socially constructed differences contribute to the ways that individuals and families experience power, privilege, discrimination, and oppression.

Social Identities

Families are made up of individuals, and each individual possesses a unique identity (figure 1.16). An **identity** consists of the combination of individual characteristics, social characteristics or identities, roles, and relationships with which a person identifies. Let's break down each of those aspects of social identity:

1. **Individual characteristics** are integral to a person's values, beliefs, and motivations.
2. **Social characteristics or social identities** can be biologically determined and/or socially constructed. Sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, first language, and religion are all social characteristics.
3. **Roles and relationships** indicate the behaviors and patterns used when interacting with others, such as parent, partner, sibling, employee, or employer.



Figure 1.16. Families are made up of individuals who share some aspects of identity but also have separate identities of their own. Photograph by Jonathan Borba. License: Unsplash License.

The social identity wheel in figure 1.17 includes some common categories for social characteristics in the middle oval. When it comes to social identity, each of us gets to determine our own. That means we determine which of our social characteristics, roles, and group memberships are most important to our own identities. While each of us gets to determine our own social identity, it is important to note that others may identify us differently than we identify ourselves. Our most notable physical aspects may signal something different than our personal lived experience.

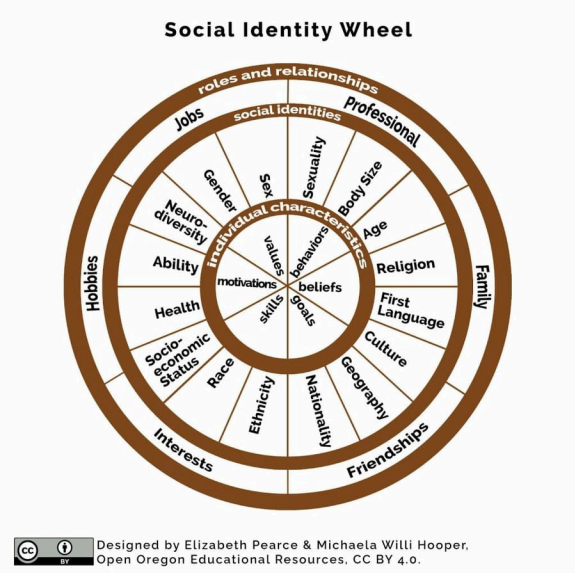


Figure 1.17. This social identity wheel includes three kinds of identities: individual characteristics, social characteristics or social identities, and roles and relationships. Image description. "Social Identity Wheel" by Liz Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0.

For example, in this video about cultural humility (which will be defined and discussed in the next section), Dr. Melanie Tervalon describes her identity as an African American woman, the difference between how she sees herself and how others see her, and the right that each of us has to our own social identity (figure 1.18).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 1.18. Cultural Humility Edited [YouTube Video]. Cultural humility involves listening to others about how they define themselves and what their experiences have been. Transcript. "Cultural Humility Edited" © W.B. Jordan. License Terms: Standard YouTube License.

The multiracial founders of Mixed in America (MIA), Jazmine Jarvis and Meagan Kimberly Smith, have a mission to empower the Mixed community and heal Mixed identities. Take a few minutes to read the first two paragraphs on their webpage here. This is what they had to say about the expression of social identity on Taylor Nolan's podcast, *Let's Talk About It*: "We wanna put the power back in the person's hands so that they can express in a way that makes them feel authentic" (Nolan, 2020).

According to the social identity theory formulated by Henri Tajfel, we see people who are members of different groups as "others" (McLeod, 2019). In general, we tend to be drawn to those more similar to ourselves, whether by appearance or related to other social characteristics, such as age, ability, or sex. This—in combination with the likelihood of overestimating the similarities within groups and the differences between groups—contributes to socially constructed differences, which we will discuss next.

The Social Construction of Difference

Social identities can help us understand the **social construction of difference**, which is when hierarchical value is assigned to perceived differences between socially constructed ideas such as race, class, age, ability, or sex (Johnson, 2006). We will extend this concept to include the social construction of difference among families. Via the socially constructed idea of family, American systems and structures regularly create and reinforce inequities among American families.

As we study families, we must keep in mind that this idea of the typical family is not representative of all families. Yet, it is

continually reinforced by the social processes and institutions in our society. Whether you consume big-budget films, social media content, video games, or books and magazines, take a look at what's in front of you. What kind of people and families do you see represented? While representation of women, people of color, and people of differing sexualities and gender expressions have increased in media, they still mostly play less consequential characters within the plotlines.

Although the majority of families in the United States no longer fit the traditional model (Pew Research Center, 2015), social institutions perpetuate the idea of a certain family structure. Government, schools, medical institutions, businesses, and places of worship all reinforce a typical view of family through the forms, activities, requirements, and processes that are shared with the public. How many times have you tried to fill out a form with checkboxes only to find that you did not "fit" into one of the boxes? Typical examples include giving parental choices of "mother" and "father," couple status choices such as "married" or "single," and gender choices such as "male" or "female"—all of which reinforce a binary view of individuals and families.

This results in there being less social support for families who don't fit this binary—for example, single-parent families, LGBTQ+ families, rural families, or families with a member who is disabled, unemployed, or has a criminal record. Accepted practices such as "Daddy-Daughter Dances," churches that exclude or condemn LGBTQ+ ministers or members, the lack of safe housing for low-income families, and educational materials that cannot be read with low vision are all examples of ways that individuals and families are less recognized and less privileged. You can probably think of other examples from your own family's perspective. Socially constructed differences contribute to many family forms being differentiated as less recognized and valued.

The Social Construction of Race

The social construction of race deserves a special mention since there is a broadly held public assumption that there are significant biological and genetic differences between human beings based on "race" (meaning observable physical differences such as skin color). In actuality, race is a social construct rather than a biological reality (figure 1.19).



Figure 1.19. Observable physical differences such as skin color are not equivalent to race. Photograph by Clay Banks. License: Unsplash License.

Scientists state that while genetic diversity exists, it does not divide along the racial lines that many humans notice (Gannon, 2016). In fact, members of the human "race" (all humans) share 99.9 % of their genes (National Human Genome Research Institute, 2011). Ancestry and geography likely influence which genes get "turned on" and expressed. What complicates our understanding of race is that we have behaved for centuries as if there is a biological difference. Because there has been a longstanding discriminatory practice against people of color, there are multiple impacts today (Berger & Luckman, 1966). The science arguing against the biological basis for racial categories suggests that race is more of a social category than a biological one. Another way to say this is that race is a social construction: a concept that has no objective reality but rather is what people decide it is.

This understanding of race is reflected in the problems of placing people with multiracial backgrounds into any one racial category. Would you consider former President Obama White, Black, or multiracial (figure 1.20)? He had one Black parent and one White parent. As another example, the well-known golfer Tiger Woods was typically called an African American by the news media when he burst onto the golfing scene in the late 1990s. Still, in fact his ancestry is one-half Asian (divided evenly between Chinese and Thai), one-quarter White, one-eighth Native American, and only one-eighth African American (Williams-León & Nakashima, 2001).



Figure 1.20. Although his ancestry is equally Black and White, Obama considers himself African American. In several Latin American nations, however, Obama would be considered White because of his White ancestry. "Barack Obama on the Primary" by Steve Jurvetson. License: CC BY 2.0.

Attempts to place people in racial categories further underscore the social constructionism of race. In the South during the time of slavery, the skin tone of the enslaved lightened over the years as babies were born from the rape of enslaved people by enslavers and other White people. Each state enacted its own definition of being "Black," and the majority of multiracial people were assigned this designation in order to keep more people enslaved.

Litigation over race continued long past the days of slavery. In a relatively recent example, Susie Guillory Phipps sued the Louisiana Bureau of Vital Records in the early 1980s to change her official race to White. Phipps was descended from an enslaver and an enslaved person and thereafter had only White ancestors. Despite this fact, she was called "Black" on her birth certificate because of a state law, echoing the "one-drop rule," that designated people as Black if their ancestry was at least 1/32 Black (meaning one of their great-great-great grandparents was Black). Phipps had always thought of herself as White and was surprised after seeing a copy of her birth certificate to discover she was officially Black because she had one Black ancestor about 150 years earlier. She lost her case, and the U.S. Supreme Court later refused to review it (Omi & Winant, 2015).

Social Construction of Other Social Identities, Including Gender

The social construction of gender is another widely accepted concept. In other words, the differences that we attribute to the biological designations of female, male, or intersex are actually predominantly constructed by our societal beliefs and not by biology. The ongoing broadening of gender identity and expression clearly demonstrates this concept.

Other identities are also constructed via societal agreement. Sexuality, ability, religion, ethnicity, age, and other identities may contain some physical parameters as well as personal meaning to the individuals who possess them. Critical to our study of families, however, is the understanding that society creates and reinforces social constructions of these characteristics, and those constructions favor some groups, discriminate against others, and generally impact the lives of families.

Social constructions are a theme throughout the text. If you'd like more reinforcement on this concept, there are two activities that you may explore.

- "What is Social Construction?" in this chapter's "Going Deeper" section, you can watch a ten-minute video and apply the concepts to your own experiences and family.
- "Social Location Impacts Families" looks specifically at social characteristics, the social construction of difference, and intersectionality from a family perspective in Chapter Two's "Going Deeper" section.

Intersectionality

Articulated by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), the concept of **intersectionality** identifies a mode of analysis integral to

women, gender, and sexuality studies (figure 1.21). Within intersectional frameworks, race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and other aspects of identity are experienced simultaneously, and the meanings of different aspects of identity are shaped by one another. For instance, notions of gender and the way a person's gender is interpreted by others are always impacted by notions of race and the way that person's race is interpreted.

Notions of Blackness, brownness, and Whiteness always influence gendered experience; there is no experience of gender that is outside of an experience of race. In addition to race, gendered experience is also shaped by age, sexuality, class, and ability; likewise, the experience of race is impacted by gender, age, class, sexuality, and ability.



Figure 1.21. An idea expressed by many women of color, intersectionality was defined and articulated by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. "Kimberlé Crenshaw" by Mohamed Badarne. License: CC BY-SA 4.0.

Understanding intersectionality requires a particular way of thinking (figure 1.22). An intersectional analysis of identity is distinct from single-determinant identity models that presume one aspect of identity (say, gender) dictates one's access to or disenfranchisement from power.

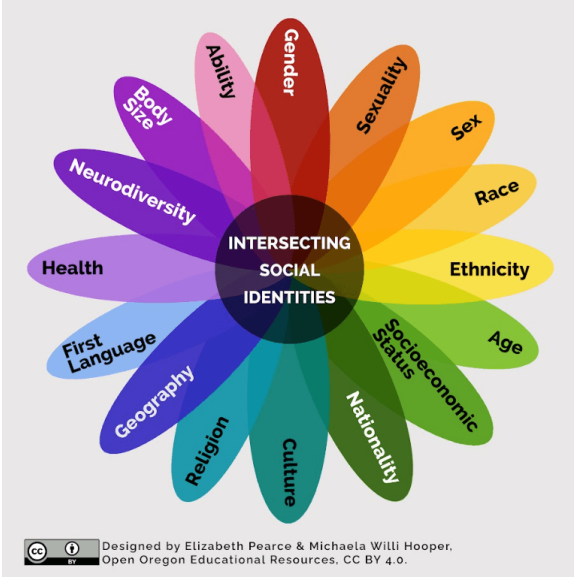


Figure 1.22. An intersectional perspective examines how identities are related to each other in our own experiences and how the social identities of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability intersect for everyone. Image description. "Intersectionality Wheel" by Liz Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0.

An example of this idea is the concept of "global sisterhood," or the idea that all women across the globe share some basic common political interests, concerns, and needs (Morgan, 2016). If women in different locations did share common interests, it would make sense for them to unite on the basis of gender to fight for social changes on a global scale. Unfortunately, if the analysis stops at gender, what is missed is an attention to how race, religion, and access to resources may actually place some women's needs in conflict with other women's needs.This approach obscures the fact that women in different social and geographic locations face different problems.

Many White, middle-class women activists of the mid-20th century United States fought for freedom to work and legal parity with men. But this was not the major problem for women of color or working-class White women, who had already been actively participating in the U.S. labor market as domestic workers, factory workers, and enslaved laborers since early colonial settlement. Campaigns for women's equal legal rights and access to the labor market are important. But women of the Global South, in particular, may have more pressing concerns: access to clean water; access to adequate health care; and safety from the physical and psychological harms of living in tyrannical, war-torn, or economically impoverished nations.

An intersectional perspective examines how identities are related to each other in our own experiences and how the social structures of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability intersect for everyone. As opposed to a single-determinant model of identity, an intersectional approach develops a more sophisticated understanding of the world and how individuals in differently situated social groups experience differential access to both material and symbolic resources (such as housing and privilege, respectively).

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=817#h5p-6

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1.5: The U.S. Government and Families

One of the most (if not *the* most) powerful social institutions in the United States is the government. It is important to note that in the United States, the federal government has three branches: legislative (Congress), executive (the president), and judicial (the court system). In addition, the Constitution recognizes the rights and responsibilities of state governments; counties and cities have governing structures as well. All of these structures legislate in ways that affect families, some directly and some indirectly. The United States is considered to be a "common law" country, meaning that laws are derived in three ways: legislation created by governing bodies; administrative rules and regulations; and decisions via judicial courts.

Family Formation and the Law

Most family law (including marriage, divorce, and adoption) is governed by the states. When there is a great deal of advocacy, unrest, inequity, or controversy, family-related matters rise to the federal level. Here are two examples:

1. In 1958, Mildred Loving, a woman of color, and Richard Loving, her White husband, were sentenced to a year of prison for marrying each other, breaking Virginia's Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which supported the now-outdated idea that separate races exist and that interbreeding (miscegenation) is problematic. The Lovings appealed their conviction in Virginia and eventually to the U.S. Supreme Court, who ruled in 1967 (*Loving v. Virginia*) that all laws banning interracial marriage were violations of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which made it illegal for individual states to restrict interracial marriage (figure 1.23).

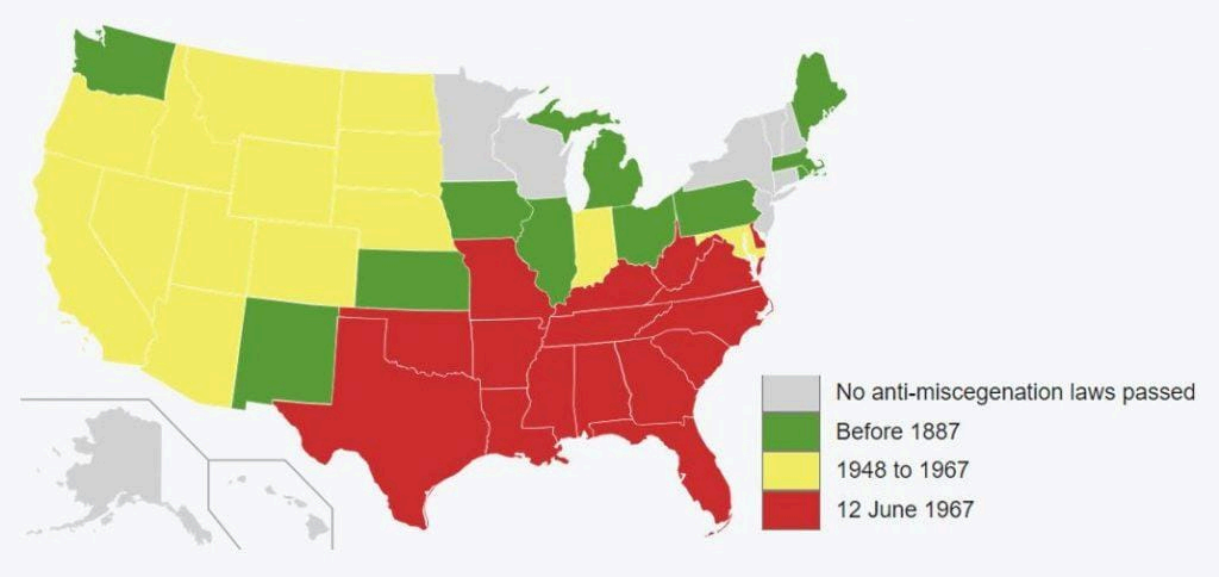


Figure 1.23. Dates of repeal of U.S. anti-miscegenation laws by state. "Dates of Repeal of U.S. Anti-Miscegenation Laws by State" by Certes. License: CC BY 3.0. Modification: moved key closer to image.

2. More recently, the ruling on *Loving v. Virginia* has been utilized to argue that laws banning same-sex marriages were also unconstitutional. Between 2012 and 2014, plaintiffs from multiple states filed in state courts to overturn state laws that criminalized same-sex marriages (figure 1.24). While several district courts found these laws to be unconstitutional, one district court ruled in favor of the constitutionality of these laws. With the split between courts, the case rose to the level of the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in 2015 that all states must perform and recognize marriages between same-sex couples (*Obergefell v. Hodges*).



Figure 1.24. In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court decided, by a narrow margin, to legalize same-sex marriage. Photo 1401430 on px.here and is in the public domain under CC0.

Of note is that while the 1967 decision to legalize interracial marriage was a unanimous decision, the 2015 decision to legalize same-sex marriage was closely contested among the U.S. Supreme Court justices and passed by a narrow 5–4 margin. It appears that there is still disagreement among the most powerful in this country about whether the language in the Fourteenth Amendment applies to marriage, gay and lesbian people, or neither. The amendment states in part: "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." How would you interpret the differentiated results of these decisions?

From *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), we can derive some understanding that governments influence whom we marry, how we divorce, and the legal relationships, rights, benefits, and taxes related to parenting, kinship structures, and children (figure 1.25). Critically, we must note that the government places value on socially constructed differences such as race, ethnicity, and sexuality in ways that impact individual and family choice.



Figure 1.25. While we may take for granted the rights of interracial couples to marry (like John Legend, who is Black, and Chrissy Teigen, who is Thai and White), this right is only guaranteed through the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court ruling. "146030_3994" by Walt Disney Television. License: CC BY-ND 2.0.

Laws are only one of the ways that government impacts family composition. Consider the federal government's role in taxing individuals and families and then redistributing that money via benefits. Benefits such as food stamps, Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), K–12 school lunches, and financial aid for college are all distributed and regulated by the government. Tax credits, such as the Child and Dependent Care Credit, are driven by the government's definition related to that specific tax. Specifically, the government's definitions of eligibility and family structure impact who receives benefits and how much they receive.

If the government defines "family" or "dependent" in a specific way, does that impact how families form? For example, college

financial aid does not count the income of a roommate or domestic partner in an applicant's income, but it does count the income of a spouse. Might this influence a college student's decision to marry? While this union is not criminalized as the previous two examples were, it is still impacted by the government's criteria related to distributing benefits. Some of us might decide to marry or not to marry based on the federal government's criteria for benefits or taxes.

Family Residence and Kinship Structure

While co-residence is considered by many family theorists to be a pillar of the definition of family, it is important to note that not all families live together. In fact, the U.S. government has played a role in separating family members from one another (immigrant and enslaved families in particular).

Sometimes, the United States has been idealized as a "melting pot" or a "salad bowl" of cultures and ethnicities. Many immigrate to this country to make a better life for themselves and their families. The borders of the United States were open until the late 1800s when the first restrictive immigration law was enacted: the Page Act of 1875, which excluded Chinese women. This act specifically targeted Chinese workers who were providing needed labor in gold mines and agriculture and, most notably, building the transcontinental railroad (figure 1.26). The Page Act was intended to discourage Chinese laborers from staying in the United States by separating them from their wives and families.



Figure 1.26. Since 1882, numerous U.S. immigration laws have targeted people from Asian and Latin American countries. "Chinese Miners Idaho Springs" by Dr. James Underhill. Public domain.

By 1882, Chinese men were excluded as well. Since that time, there have been numerous restrictive versions of immigration laws in the United States, most of them targeting people from Asian and Latin American countries. In combination with these laws, the United States has continued to rely on immigrant labor to perform less desirable and lower-paying jobs, specifically in agriculture, sanitation, service, and cleaning.

The experiences of families who have members who have immigrated to the U.S. are integrated throughout the text. You will see how laws that encourage specific kinds of immigration often are disruptive to families. For example, restrictive immigration laws and policies have contributed to the formation of involuntary transnational families whose members live on different continents and/or in different countries. Look toward these chapters to learn more about families who have immigrated to the U.S.:

- Chapter Four contains in-depth discussion about how border policies specifically impact parents and children;
- Chapter Eight discusses the Bracero program and housing implications for families;
- Chapter Ten more fully explains the ways that food production relies on immigrant families;
- Chapter Eleven specifically looks at the difficulties families face in becoming documented.

Another related idealization of the United States originates in the Declaration of Independence, which states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (Jefferson et al., 1776). It is difficult to defend equality as a fundamental right, both when the document was written and today as well. The most obvious example is the enslavement of people from Africa, who were intentionally imprisoned and brought to this country; even when freed, they continued to have legally limited rights. Women were excluded from land ownership, voting, and being able to file for divorce. The U.S.government specifically secured the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for one group of people (Euro-American males); enslaved another group (African Americans); and used legal means to oppress Native Americans, women, and immigrants.

Slavery dramatically affected family formations and kinship structures. Because human beings were considered property, their family ties were disregarded, which meant that children were habitually separated from their parents, adults were not able to marry at will, and common-law spouses were removed from one another at the will of the enslaver. Violence against women in the form of rape resulted in parenting relationships that were structured and controlled by the enslavers.

There is continued discussion about the effects on families who have descended from enslaved people. While families were forcibly separated, there was resistance to the severance of family ties. For example, children taken from their birth parents and sold were often assigned to adults in caregiving relationships. People forced together created families and used kin names such as “aunt,” “uncle,” and “cousin” to delineate familial relationships. Because enslaved people were often thrown in together with others who came from all over Africa with differing customs and traditions, it is difficult to know which family practices that survived came from original traditions and which came from active resistance to the disruption of their biological and chosen families (Taylor, 2000).

Both free and enslaved African Americans played active roles during the American Revolution and the writing of the Declaration of Independence. About 20% of enslaved people escaped and sought sanctuary among Native Americans or the British during the war. Many fought in the war, including Private Lemuel Haynes, who believed that the revolution should also be a war against slavery. He rebutted the Declaration of Independence, saying the document’s principle of freedom should put an end to slavery. Thousands of Black fighters for freedom participated in the emancipation of the United States from Britain (Ortiz, 2018).

In Focus: What We Teach in School Affects Family Identity and Structure

Dean Spade is a lawyer, writer, trans activist, and associate professor of law at the Seattle University School of Law. He grew up with a single mother and in foster homes. He is known for his work with transgender, intersex, and gender nonconforming people who are low income and/or people of color. He founded a nonprofit law collective that provides free legal services to members of these groups. He writes critically about intersectionality, historical records, and the limits of law in *Normal Life*:

> Social movements engaged in resistance have given us a very different portrayal of the United States than what is taught in most elementary school classrooms and textbooks. The patriotic narrative delivered at school tells us a few key lies about U.S. law and politics: that the United States is a democracy in which law and policy derive from what majority of people think is best, that the United States used to be racist and sexist but is now fair and neutral thanks to changes in the law, and that if particular groups experience harm, they can appeal to the law for protection.
>
> Social movements have challenged this narrative, identifying the United States as a settler colony and a racial project, founded and built through genocide and enslavement. They have shown that the United States has always had laws that arrange people through categories of indigeneity, race, gender, ability, and national origin to produce populations with different levels of vulnerability to economic exploitation, violence, and poverty (Spade, 2015).



Figure 1.27. Dean Spade has been named one of the “50 Visionaries Who are Changing Your World”. “Dean Spade on the Laura Flanders Show in 2015” by The Laura Flanders Show. License: CC BY 3.0.

Spade reminds us that as long as we continue to teach children without using a truthful and critical lens on our past, we will continue to reinforce the differences constructed by government and society.

Comprehension Self Check

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1.6: Looking Ahead- Social Structures and Kinship



Figure 1.28. Understanding how structures like institutions and societal views limit families can help us to strive for equity. "LGBTQ Employment Rights" by Victoria Pickering. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

In this text, we will discuss the ways in which social institutions and processes continue to reinforce the inequities created within the original formation of the United States. We will focus on the federal government and the tension that exists between federal powers and state's rights, which often leads to inequities among American families. We will examine other social institutions such as school systems, health care/insurance structures, the economy, businesses, and places of worship. We will look at the bidirectional nature of people and institutions: the ways that individuals and families organize to create social movements that influence existing practices and structures and the ways those practices and structures influence people.

By examining the existing structures that limit families, we strive to be a part of the change that will transform our institutions, societal views, and processes in a way that increases and supports equity for all families (figure 1.28).

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1.7: Going Deeper

Now that you have some foundational concepts related to the history and study of families, this section has some resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, there are activities that may be used in the classroom or as assignments.

Want to Learn More?

- For 2022 data about family structure, check out "The Modern American Family: Key Trends in Marriage and Family Life" with data collected by the Pew Research Center in 2023.
- To delve into additional data and read more about how age affects employment and families, read "If You're Over 50, Chances Are the Decision to Leave a Job Won't Be Yours," a data analysis by ProPublica and the Urban Institute.
- Explore mixed racial and ethnic identities with Megan Kimberly Smith and Jazmine Jarvis on the website Mixed in America. Listen to their full podcast interview with Taylor Nolan.
- To understand more about the treatment of people who were enslaved and strategies for maintaining White dominance, read Boundless U.S. History's chapter about the treatment of enslaved people, including sexual abuse.
- If you'd like to read more about the development of the Constitution, click here.
- To read a summary of the U.S. Supreme Court case that affected interracial marriage, click here.
- To learn more about how immigration laws affect families of people who immigrate to the United States:
  - Wikipedia provides a list of major immigration laws from 1790 through 2012.
  - In this article in *The Atlantic*, more recent laws and practices are discussed.

Reflective Questions

1. How does the social construction of difference contrast with a social construction?
2. If you could add a third image in Figure 1.3, what television family would you choose and why?
3. How is equity different from equality and fairness?
4. What are the big demographic family trends in the United States, and how is your own family similar or different?
5. What is the "nostalgia trap"? What are "separate spheres"? How do they relate to today's families?
6. What is a social identity? Can you describe your own social identity via your roles, characteristics, and groups you belong to? Do you have any intersectional social identities?
7. How does intersectionality relate to equity?
8. How has the government affected the structure of kinship and family? Families with which social identities have been most affected by this social structure?

Key Terms

These terms are needed to understand the concepts in this chapter and will appear in other chapters in the text.

- **Collectivist society:** a societal viewpoint that focuses on meeting the needs and goals of all members of a community rather

than focusing on individual successes.

- **Comparative approach:** within the fields of anthropology and sociology, the act of examining and contrasting social processes and institutions with a view to draw inferences and understand patterns.
- **Demographics:** statistical data about particular groups and changes in trends within the overall population.
- **Equity:** ensuring that people have what they need in order to have a healthy, successful life that is equal to others. This is different from equality in that some may receive more help than others in order to be at the same level of success.
- **Individualistic society:** emphasizes the needs and success of the individual over the needs of a community.
- **Intersectionality:** an approach originally advanced by women of color that finds it critical to look at how identities and characteristics (such as ethnicity, race, and gender) overlap and influence each other to create complex hierarchies of power and oppression.
- **Kinship:** the social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships.
- **Nuclear family:** a family group that consists of two parents and their children living together in one household.
- **Private function of families:** focuses on the intimate relationships of family members. Being a part of a loving relationship that will last forever, or an indefinite amount of time, is seen as a core part of being a family member.
- **Public function of families:** focuses on contributions to society such as the production of children or caring for others.
- **Separate spheres:** a binary, gender-based ideology that emerged during the industrial period that stated women were best suited for home and domestic work while men were best suited for public work.
- **Social characteristic:** describes traits that may be biologically determined and/or socially constructed. Examples include sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, first language, and religion.
- **Social construction:** meaning assigned to an object or event by mutual agreement (explicit or implicit) of the members of a society; can change over time and/or location.
- **Social construction of difference:** hierarchical value assigned to perceived differences between one socially constructed idea and another. Class, race, and other hierarchies based on social identity are social constructions of difference.
- **Social identity:** a person's sense of self as defined by and in relation to the combination of social characteristics, roles, and groups to which they belong.
- **Social structure:** the organization of institutions within society; this affects the ways individuals and families interact together.
- **Standard North American Family (SNAF):** a family group that consists of two parents and their children living together in one household.

Activity: What Is Social Construction?

In this introductory chapter, you've learned about social constructions. Figure 1.29, an 11-minute video, explores this topic more deeply. The video includes examples of our society's social constructions, including symbols such as the flag and human characteristics such as gender and race.

YouTube Video

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Figure 1.29 Social Construction [YouTube Video]. In this video, two professors provide multiple examples of social constructions from everyday life that may surprise you! Transcript. "Social Construction" by Elizabeth B. Pearce, Kimberly Puttman, and Colin Stapp and Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0.

Discussion Questions

1. Choose one example of social construction from the first seven minutes of the video that most surprised or intrigued you. Explain how you know that the concept is socially constructed and what interested you about this example.
2. In the last four minutes of the video, the social constructions of gender and race are discussed. Choose either gender or race

to apply to your own or your family's life. In what ways can you relate to the social construction of gender or race?

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CHAPTER 2: STUDYING FAMILIES

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the value of studying families.
2. Describe the main methods of researching families.
3. Discuss the ways of thinking and learning that students will use to best learn about the complexity of family life, social structures, and equity in the United States.
4. Describe the dimensions of diversity.
5. Explain the levels of social stratification and its relationship to equity.
6. Recognize seven major theoretical perspectives.
7. Define a social problem using an equity perspective.
8. Predict how studying families will impact your future.

2.1: Chapter Reading Guide

2.2: How and Why We Study Families

2.3: Research Methods and Applications to Studying Families

2.4: Learning about Families

2.5: Social Stratification in Families

2.6: Theories, Perspectives, and Key Concepts

2.7: What Is a Social Problem?

2.8: Looking Ahead- Life Course Theory and COVID-19

2.9: Going Deeper

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2.1: Chapter Reading Guide

In this chapter you will learn more of the specifics of studying families. How do experts learn about families? What methods do they use? And what do you, the learner, need to do in order to learn about the diversity of families in the United States? You will also be exposed to some of the theories that are used in order to better understand family structures, dynamics, and behaviors.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Age:** the developmental changes and transitions that come with being a child, adolescent, or adult.
- **Cultural humility:** the focus on staying other-centered in order to learn about and understand the experiences and viewpoints of people with social identities different from your own.
- **Culture:** the shared meanings and shared experiences passed down over time by individuals in a group.
- **Disabilities:** the visible or hidden and temporary or permanent conditions that create barriers or challenges in one's life.
- **Experiments:** a primary form of research in natural and physical sciences that involves comparing and contrasting at least two different interventions.
- **First language:** the language learned in early childhood.
- **Gender:** a socially constructed expression of a person's sexual identity that influences the status, roles, and norms for their behavior.
- **Objectivity:** the act of staying free from the influence of personal experiences and opinions.
- **Observational studies:** a type of field research that includes both participant observation and nonparticipant observation.
- **Origin:** the geographical location where a person was born and spent (at least) their early years in.
- **Qualitative research:** the descriptive, in-depth study of a topic.
- **Quantitative research:** the numbers-based, measurable study of a topic.
- **Race:** the categorization of humans using observable physical or biological criteria, such as skin color, hair color or texture, facial features, etc.
- **Research:** a systematic investigation into a particular topic, examining materials, sources, and/or behaviors.
- **Scientific process:** the process of formulating hypotheses, making observations, gathering and testing data, drawing conclusions, and modifying hypotheses.
- **Secondary data analysis:** the study of existing research.
- **Sex:** a biological descriptor involving chromosomes and internal/external reproductive organs.
- **Sexual orientation:** a person's emotional, romantic, erotic, and spiritual attractions toward another in relation to their own sex or gender.
- **Socioeconomic class:** a person's income or material wealth, educational status, and/or occupational status.
- **Social class:** similar to socioeconomic status with a closer focus on income and wealth.
- **Sociological perspective:** viewpoints that emphasize causes, effects, and actions of groups of individuals, including patterns of behaviors.
- **Social mobility:** an individual's or family's movement through the class hierarchy due to changes in income, occupation, or wealth.
- **Social model of ability:** a view of diagnoses from a social and environmental perspective that considers multiple ecological levels.
- **Social problem:** a large issue that affects many people, can threaten the health and well-being of society, is recognized as a problem by many, includes multiple causes and effects, and needs a systemic solution.
- **Social stratification:** society's layers, made of people, represent the uneven distribution of society's resources.
- **Structural mobility:** societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the social class ladder.
- **Subjective:** influenced by personal experiences and opinions.
- **Survey:** a method by which sociologists gather their data by asking questions.
- **Theory:** a structural framework, explanation, or tool that has been tested and evaluated over time.

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2.2: How and Why We Study Families

Families and kinship are of great interest to most, if not all, people. We all have a family, whether or not that family meets the socially constructed definition of family that is common in the United States or our own definition of family.

Objective and Subjective Views

Sociologist Paul Amato separates family into objective and subjective definitions (Amato, 2019). The objective definitions are often provided by governmental structures. Employers, schools, and agencies also rely on these definitions. **Subjective** definitions are both richer in context and more complicated to explain. This includes your own definition of family. When we are discussing equity and families, we must attend to the subjective definitions. Because it is only by measuring the experiences of all families in the United States that we can really perceive how privilege, power, and discrimination affect families.

Using Your Sociological Imagination

We study families in order to better understand ourselves. When we can see our own family within the greater context of the experiences of other families and societal influences and trends, we understand ourselves better. Being able to relate your own experiences to these greater forces and interactions with the world is called the **sociological imagination**.

Sociologist Charles Wright Mills created this term in 1959 in order to help explain the ways that the field of sociology contributes to both everyday life and academia (Wright Mills, 1959). Throughout this course and this text you will be given opportunities to develop your sociological imagination. Ask yourself how your own family's experiences relate to the broad trends and events in this country. Where do you fit? Or do you find yourself an outlier, differing from other members of your family, social group, or society?

Learning about Others

We also study families in order to better understand other families and society. In this way we recognize both the uniqueness of each family and the ways in which groups share identities and experiences. Let's say that you feel familiar with the experience of a rural student family, because you are a student and you live in a rural community. You may be able to speak very eloquently to the challenges students are facing today and what living in a rural setting means about your access to education, medical care, healthy food, and transportation. At the same time, you cannot speak for all rural student families, because every family has a unique history and set of circumstances that affects their lives. So part of your job in studying families is to listen and understand how those other rural student families experience life.

Simultaneously we study families to understand the circumstances and experiences of families that we have never met. It's even more important to listen to and understand families we might see as different from us. You might easily see the differences between a family that has immigrated to the United States in the past 10 years as compared to a family made up of people who have lived in the United States for several generations. Could you imagine living in a country that uses a different language than what you grew up speaking? Or vice versa? While we might quickly identify those kinds of differences, we need to study more deeply to understand at least two other themes:

- How our families share similar love, goals, and needs.
- How our families may be treated differently by United States institutions and society.

The greater our ability to comprehend each other's experiences, the more likely we will be able to better understand how families are similar in what they need and what they do, as well as what the differences are among family experiences in the United States.

Families and Social Structure

We study families in order to understand how they interact with other social structures within the United States. There are a variety of definitions for social structure, but they all include the idea of "structure," an ordered arrangement or pattern, and the idea of "social," which denotes individual persons or groups, such as tribes, families, or religious organizations. In this text, we will focus

on the living, changing aspect of social structure, especially large social organizations that affect families, such as the media, the government, and the health care system.

We study families to make a difference in our everyday lives: to better understand our own families, neighbors, and friends. Studying families also helps us in our work lives. All of us will work with a diverse group of individuals, all of whom have families. Whether you are a teacher who influences the next generation, a business owner who coordinates benefits for your employees, a marketing director who designs advertising campaigns, a computer programmer who creates code, or a social worker who helps people solve life problems, you will both work alongside a group of diverse individuals who have families, and you will have clients, consumers, or customers who are members of this diverse country.

Using an Equity Lens to Study Families

The title of this text, *Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens,* may lead you to wonder what an equity lens is. In Chapter 1, we described the difference between equality and equity, focusing on equity (ensuring that each person or family has what they need). An equity lens helps us to consider how actions can translate into equity for all. Lane County, Oregon defines it this way on its website:

> A racial equity lens is a set of questions we ask ourselves when we plan, develop or evaluate a policy, program or decision. Using an equity lens will help us identify potential impacts on institutionally under-served and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers.
>
> The purpose of an equity lens is to be deliberately inclusive as we make decisions and to support us as we strive towards more equitable outcomes....An equity lens will not tell us what action to take. Rather, the lens helps us discuss and reflect on equity considerations as we act and make decisions (Lane County, 2016).

How does this relate to you, a college student? You are already an actor in your own family and community. You may coach your child's volleyball team or serve on the student council. Perhaps you volunteer for a local agency that serves the houseless or children who have been abused. You make decisions every day about whom you say "hello" to, whom you smile at, and whom you sit next to in class. All of these decisions have the power to effect change when you think about them from an equity lens.

In this text, we will provide historical and cross-cultural context related to families' varied experiences but focus on the current status of families in the United States. An equity lens is applied throughout the text as we take a **structural diversity** approach to understand what families need, how and whether those needs are met, the role that social structures play in family outcomes, and the ways that individuals and families can make a difference.

You will also see thinking related to critical theory and critical race theory (CRT), which also examines institutions and power structures. In the short video in figure 2.1, Megan Paulson defines CRT, then goes on to talk about the positive effect on students of all races and ethnicities when they have usable terms and language to talk about what they experience in terms of difference in their daily lives.

YouTube Video

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Figure 2.1. A Minute and Over: Critical Race Theory [YouTube Video]. An equity lens benefits all people, not only members of underserved groups. Transcript. "A Minute and Over: Critical Race Theory" © PhillipsAndover. License Terms: Standard YouTube License.

It is the intent of the authors of this text that students use what they learn in this class to better understand their own experiences and the experiences of others. Discussion in face-to-face and online environments is encouraged. This text examines what families need and how institutions and society can support or get in the way of those needs. This will lead to a better understanding and analysis of how existing social processes and institutions contribute to family inequity.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=827#h5p-8

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2.3: Research Methods and Applications to Studying Families

Much of what we know about families and kinship comes from **research**, systematic investigations into a particular topic which examinines materials, sources, and/or behaviors, conducted in the United States and in other countries. In order to be a critical consumer of research, it is helpful to understand what methodologies are used, and what their strengths and limitations are. In addition, it is useful to be aware that there are myths and beliefs that we hold because society has created and reinforced them. When learning new information we must be prepared to question our own long-held beliefs in order to incorporate greater understanding.

Sound research is an essential tool for understanding families. Families are complex because there are multiple ways that families form and function. Every family is composed of unique individuals. Studies about families seek to learn about how families interact internally as well as with the greater social world. What are the effects of actions and environments on families? How do families treat each other within their structures? For example, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted individuals and families in multiple ways, changing most people's health, social, work, school, and home environments. But how do we understand and quantify those changes? What impacts, dynamics, consequences, and solutions have families experienced?

The table in figure 2.2 briefly describes the major ways scholars gather information, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and a narrative of each method follows.

Figure 2.2 This table lists some advantages and disadvantages of sociological data collection methods. "Research Methods Table" " is adapted from "Understanding Social Problems" in Social Problems: Continuity and Change by Anonymous. License: CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Adaptations: edited for clarity, brevity, timeliness, and relevance.

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Survey	Many people can be included. If given to a random sample of the population, a survey's results can be generalized to the population.	Large surveys are expensive and time consuming. Although much information is gathered, this information is relatively superficial.
Experiments	If random assignment is used, experiments provide fairly convincing data on cause and effect.	Because experiments do not involve random samples of the population and most often involve college students, their results cannot readily be generalized to the population.
Observation (Field Research)	Observational studies may provide rich, detailed information about the people who are observed.	Because observation studies do not involve random samples of the population, their results cannot readily be generalized to the population.
Existing Data	Because existing data have already been gathered, the researcher does not have to spend time and money to gather data.	The dataset being analyzed may not contain data on all the variables in which a sociologist is interested, or it may contain data on variables that are not measured in ways the sociologist prefers.

Surveys

The **survey** is the most common method by which sociologists gather their data. The Gallup poll is perhaps the most well-known example of a survey and, like all surveys, gathers its data with the help of a questionnaire that is given to a group of respondents. The Gallup poll is an example of a survey conducted by a private organization, but sociologists do their own surveys, as does the government and many organizations in addition to Gallup. Common survey formats include face-to-face and telephone surveys, as well as internet tools such as Google forms and email.

Many surveys are administered to respondents who are randomly chosen and thus constitute a random sample. In a random sample, everyone in the population (whether it be the whole U.S. population or just the population of a state or city, all the college students in a state or city or all the students at just one college, etc.) has the same chance of being included in the survey. The beauty of a random sample is that it allows us to generalize the results of the sample to the population from which the sample comes. This means that we can be fairly sure of the behavior and attitudes of the whole U.S. population by knowing the behavior

and attitudes of just four hundred people randomly chosen from that population.

Surveys are used in the study of families to gather information about the behavior and attitudes of people regarding their behaviors. For example, many surveys ask people about their use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs or about their experiences of being unemployed or in poor health. Many of the chapters in this book will present evidence gathered by surveys carried out by sociologists and other social scientists, various governmental agencies, and private research and public interest firms.

Experiments

Experiments are the primary form of research in the natural and physical sciences, but in the social sciences, they are for the most part, found only in psychology. Some sociologists still use experiments, however, and they remain a powerful tool of social research.

The major advantage of experiments, whether they are done in the natural and physical sciences or in the social sciences, is that the researcher can be fairly sure of a cause-and-effect relationship because of the way the experiment is set up. Although many different experimental designs exist, the typical experiment consists of an experimental group and a control group, with subjects randomly assigned to either group. The researcher does something to the experimental group that is not done to the control group.

As you might imagine, ethical issues emerge rapidly when we think of human beings and family life as the subject of this type of experiment. What if an experiment denied or forbade prenatal care to pregnant women in the control group but provided and encouraged it to another group of pregnant women? So experiments, while useful, are not commonly used to study families.

Observational Studies

Observational research is a staple of sociology. Sociologists have a long history of observing people and social settings, and the result has been many rich descriptions and analyses of behavior in families, schools, gangs, bars, urban street corners, and even whole communities.

Observational studies, also called field research, consist of both participant observation and nonparticipant observation. Their names describe how they differ. In participant observation, the researcher is part of the group that they are studying—they spend time with the group and might even live with people in the group. In nonparticipant observation, the researcher observes a group of people but does not otherwise interact with them. If you went to your local shopping mall to observe whether people walking with children looked happier than people without children, you would be engaging in nonparticipant observation.

Similar to experiments, observational studies cannot automatically be generalized to other settings or members of the population. But in many ways they provide a richer account of people's lives than surveys do, and they remain an important method of research on social problems.

Analysis and Synthesis of Existing Data

Sometimes, sociologists do not gather their own data but instead, analyze existing data that someone else has gathered. The U.S. Census Bureau, for example, gathers data on all kinds of areas relevant to the lives of Americans, and many sociologists analyze census data on such social problems as poverty, unemployment, and illness. Sociologists and psychologists interested in crime and the criminal justice system may analyze data from court records, while medical researchers often analyze data from patient records at hospitals.

Analysis of existing data such as these is called **secondary data analysis**. Its advantage to sociologists is that someone else has already spent the time and money to gather the data. If one study does not contain all the data that the researcher needs, they may synthesize data from multiple studies, both quantitative and qualitative, to reach broader conclusions.

Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Research can be qualitative, quantitative, or sometimes both. **Quantitative research** deals with numbers and statistics, whereas **qualitative research** deals with words and with meanings. Both of these kinds of analyses are important for understanding

families. For example, quantitative research can tell us how many, or what percentage of families studied, have participated in a social process such as marriage, divorce, or remarriage. Qualitative research can tell us how members of that family experienced the process: what emotional reactions did they have, what did it mean to them, and what other actions or behaviors they attribute to being involved in the specific social process (marriage, divorce, or remarriage). Quantitative research is measurable; qualitative research is descriptive.

The Scientific Process and Objectivity

This section began by stressing the need for sound research in the study of social problems. But what are the elements of sound research? At a minimum, such research should follow the rules of the **scientific process**: formulating hypotheses, making observations, gathering and testing data, drawing conclusions, and modifying hypotheses. These steps, as shown in figure 2.3, help guarantee that research yields the most accurate, descriptive, and reliable conclusions possible.

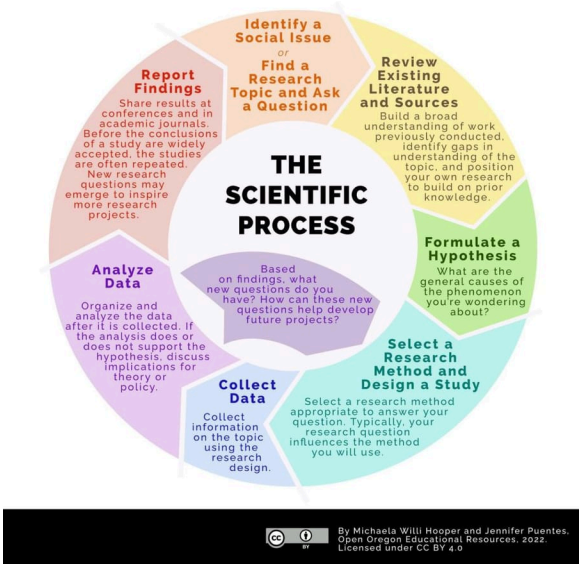


Figure 2.3. The scientific process is a way of thinking about and acting on ideas and theories. Image description. "The Scientific Process" by Michaela Willi Hooper and Jennifer Puentes, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY.

An overriding principle of the scientific process is that research should be conducted as objectively as possible. Researchers are often passionate about their work, but they must take care not to let the findings they expect and even hope to uncover affect how they do their research. This, in turn, means that they must not conduct their research in a manner that helps achieve the results they expect or desire to find. Such bias can happen unconsciously, and the scientific process helps reduce the potential for this bias as much as possible.

Comprehension Self Check

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2.4: Learning about Families

One of the most important aspects of learning about families and equity is you, the learner. In order for your brain to change, adapt, and assimilate new information, you will need to work at it. Reading, writing, and discussing the material is not enough. It's a start, but the disposition that you bring to this experience will make a large impact on what you learn.

- Are you willing to set aside existing assumptions and ideas when you read something that doesn't make sense to you at first?
- Are you willing to question beliefs that may be ingrained in multiple generations of your own family or kinship group?
- Are you willing to be uncomfortable during this learning process?
- Will you work to listen to others that have different social identities than your own?

Being open to trying out new ideas and ways of thinking will help you learn and your brain grow new understandings and neural pathways. We will talk about three learning dispositions in the following sections.

Cognitive and Emotional Perspective-Taking

To understand the diversity of family experiences in the United States, you as students will need to practice "putting yourself in another person's shoes." Seeing that people have beliefs, values, emotions, and responses that can overlap with and differ from our own will expose the richness and depth of family life. It is important to note that we cannot always predict how we (or someone else!) will respond given a particular circumstance. Instead, it is our work as students to listen, understand, and learn more about what families experience and how they function in the United States. In particular, it is critical to listen to those we perceive as belonging to different social groups than ourselves. By adopting an attitude of listening, rather than an attitude of judging, we will increase our knowledge base.

Objectivity and Humanity

Every human being has a unique set of characteristics, experiences, and beliefs. Part of what makes us human is the ability to think, reflect, and form conclusions based on our particular set of circumstances. This is likewise true of social scientists, the human beings who study other humans, our social groups, and interactions. We rely on empirical research—data collected and analyzed by social scientists—to learn about individuals and families. These scientists emerge from a variety of disciplines including anthropology, education, human development and family sciences, psychology, and sociology.

Sociologists embrace the research principle of **objectivity**, the act of setting aside their own beliefs and experiences in order to conduct unbiased study or analysis of their subjects. Creating objectivity is considered crucial to the scientific process, which includes formulating a hypothesis that is then tested via the collection and analysis of information. At the same time, we must acknowledge that this method was created and validated almost exclusively by people of one gender and one race (male and European or White) and there is room for refinement of this thinking.

The feminist perspective (described later in this chapter in "Theoretical Perspectives and Key Concepts" and the table in figure 2.14) introduces some complexity to the idea of objectivity by emphasizing that in order to truly understand our social structure, researchers must acknowledge that every human being (themselves included) brings their own viewpoint based on their unique set of social characteristics to their work. The intersection of our gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexuality, ability, and other identities along with our own life experiences makes each of us unique. Scientists must understand their own perspective, or bias, in order to do their best to both recognize the impact of their own viewpoint and to attempt to set it aside while collecting and analyzing information.

Cultural Humility



Figure 2.4. Listening to other people is key to understanding them. Photograph by RODNAE Productions from Pexels. www.pexels.com/photo/stylish-men-talking-while-leaning-on-the-concrete-wall-8126592/.

Cultural humility is the ability to remain open to learning about others' experiences related to their social identities while acknowledging one's own lack of competence and recognizing power dynamics that impact the relationship (figure 2.4). Within cultural humility, it is important to engage in continuous self-reflection, recognize the impact of power dynamics on individuals and communities, embrace "not knowing," and commit to lifelong learning. This approach to diversity encourages a curious spirit and the ability to openly engage with others in the process of learning about a different culture. As a result, it is important to address power imbalances and develop meaningful relationships with community members in order to create positive change.

As our world becomes increasingly diverse and interconnected, understanding different cultures becomes crucial. Without a basic understanding of the beliefs and experiences of individuals, people can unintentionally contribute to prejudice and discrimination or negatively impact relationships and interactions. To understand cultural experiences, it is important to consider the context of social identity, history, and individual and community experiences with prejudice and discrimination. It is also important to acknowledge that our understanding of cultural differences evolves through an ongoing learning process (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).

The next section includes dimensions of diversity that are related to culture. You will notice that many of these dimensions correspond with the social identity wheel that was introduced in Chapter 1 of this text.

Dimensions of Diversity within Families

Although it is impossible to discuss all of the dimensions of human diversity in this section, we present some common dimensions that will be discussed in this text. The authors also acknowledge the importance of intersectionality, which was described in Chapter 1, as well as the process of cultural humility in understanding diversity.

Culture

> "Culture is something that unites people."
> —Anastasiya O., Russia

While numerous definitions exist, the key components of **culture** include shared meanings and shared experiences by individuals in a group that are passed down over time with each generation. That is, cultures have shared beliefs, values, practices, definitions, and other elements that are expressed through family socialization, formal schooling, shared language, social roles, and norms for feeling, thinking, and acting (Cohen, 2009).

Culture can be examined at multiple ecological levels to understand its impact. This means that culture can influence the norms

and practices of individuals, families, organizations, local communities, and the broader society. For example, cultural influences can have an impact on how members function and interact with one another. Further, culture should be understood within a broader context of power relationships and how power is used and distributed (Trickett, 2011).

Race

While physical differences often are used to define race, in general, there is no consensus for this term. Typically, **race** has been defined using observable physical or biological criteria, such as skin color, hair color or texture, facial features, and so forth (figure 2.5). However, these biological assumptions of race have been determined to be inaccurate and harmful by biologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and other scientists.



Figure 2.5. Most genetic variation exists within racial groups rather than between groups. Photograph by OpenClipart-Vectors. License: Pixabay License.

Instead, we should think of race as something that has been socially constructed and has different social and psychological meanings in many societies (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). In the United States, people of color experience more racial prejudice and discrimination than White people. The meanings and definitions of race have also changed over time and are often driven by policies and laws (for example, the one-drop rule). If you'd like to know more about the one-drop rule, click here. It can be concluded that although race is not based on biological differences, it has still fundamentally influenced our social structures and has harmed dark-skinned people in many ways.

In Focus: Is Race a Selected Identity?

Rachel Dolezal, also known as Nkechi Amare Diallo, was born to White parents with no known African ancestry. As a young adult, she became involved in civil rights, became a college instructor of Africana studies, and began self-identifying as a Black woman. She even became president of the Spokane, Washington, chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).



Figure 2.6. Definitions of race have changed over time and are often driven by policies and laws. Photograph by johnhain. License: Pixabay License.

She resigned from her position with the NAACP and was dismissed from her role as an instructor after information surfaced casting doubt upon her racial heritage. She later acknowledged that she was born to White parents but continued to insist that she strongly identifies as a Black woman. The changing and varied ways that definitions of race change over time show that it is a social construction as shown in figure 2.6

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to one's social identity based on the culture of origin, ancestry, or affiliation with a cultural group (Pinderhughes, 1989). Ethnicity is not the same as nationality, which is a person's status of belonging to a specific nation by birth or citizenship. For example, an individual can be of Japanese ethnicity but British nationality because they were born in the United Kingdom. Ethnicity is defined by aspects of subjective culture, such as customs, language, and social ties (figure 2.7; Resnicow et al., 1999).



Figure 2.7. Asian Americans have roots in over 20 countries in Asia and India. "Elderly Japanese Women" by Teo Romera. License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

While ethnic groups are combined into broad categories for research or demographic purposes in the United States, there are many ethnicities among the ones you may be familiar with. Latine, Latino/a/x, and Hispanic all refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish, Dominican, or many other ancestries. Asian Americans have roots in over 20 countries in Asia and India, with the six largest Asian ethnic subgroups in the United States being the Chinese, Asian Indians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Japanese.

Origin and First Language

Origin refers to the geographical location where a person was born and spent (at least) their early years in. This includes regions of the United States as well as other countries. A person's origin will impact the cultural norms that influence them during their early childhood development, or perhaps longer. In addition, it may mean that their first language is not English. **First language** refers to the language learned in early childhood. This language may be learned in the home, in a childcare setting, and in greater society. Even within the United States, there are regional differences in language.

Origin and first language are closely tied to culture and ethnicity, but there are differentiations as well. For example, a Filipino person may have grown up in the Philippines, the mainland United States, or in Hawaii. In the Philippines, while the official languages are English and Filipino, there are 183 living languages, many of which are Indigenous. A person growing up there might speak one or more of these languages. A Filipino person growing up on the mainland of the United States would likely learn English but may also use the Filipino language at home. A Filipino person growing up in Hawaii might be exposed to English, the Hawaiian language (although banned in 1898, there are still remnants), and the Filipino language. Because the Hawaiian language and Filipino language are from the same language family, there may be an additional crossover. As this simplified example illustrates, there is the possibility of great diversity both among and within people who share a similar origin or first language.

Gender and Sex

Gender refers to the socially constructed perceptions of biological sex, and used to be focused on the binary of male and female in society. Gender is now considered to have broader interpretations in society, including the gender identity of non-binary. Gender is different from **sex**, which is a biological descriptor involving chromosomes and internal/external reproductive organs (figure 2.8) that is typically assigned at birth. As a socially constructed concept, gender has magnified the perceived differences between females and males, leading to limitations in attitudes, roles, and how social institutions are organized and the emergence of non-binary identities.



Figure 2.8. Gender identity is determined by the individual and may be different from the sex assigned at birth. Photograph by OpenClipart-Vectors. License: Pixabay License.

Gender is not just a demographic category but also influences gender norms, the distribution of power and resources, access to opportunities, and other important processes (Bond, 1999). The attention to other gender identities is increasing, both academically and publicly. One example is the case of Nicole Maines challenging her elementary school's restroom policy, which resulted in a victory when the Maine Supreme Judicial Court ruled that she had been excluded from the restroom because of her transgender identity (Maines, 2015).

Age



Figure 2.9. Age describes the developmental changes and transitions that come with being a child, adolescent, or adult. Photograph by OpenClipart-Vectors. License: Pixabay License.

Age describes the developmental changes and transitions that come with being a child, adolescent, or adult (figure 2.9). Power dynamics, relationships, physical and psychological health concerns, community participation, life satisfaction, and so forth can all vary for these different age groups (Cheng & Heller, 2009). Although the field has started to include aging issues in research, Cheng and Heller found that this segment of the population has been neglected (Cheng & Heller, 2009).

Socioeconomic Status



Figure 2.10. Socioeconomic status can include a person's income or material wealth, educational status, occupational status, and/or housing status. "Homeless" by born1945. License: CC BY 2.0.

Like the other components of diversity, socioeconomic status is socially constructed and can affect our choices and opportunities (figure 2.10). **Socioeconomic status** includes a person's income or material wealth, educational status, and/or occupational status. It can include assumptions about where a person belongs in society and indicate differences in power, privilege, economic opportunities and resources, and social capital.

Sexual Orientation



Figure 2.11. Sexual orientation is different from gender identity or gender expression. "SCOTUS APRIL 2015 LGBTQ 54663" by Ted Eytan. License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's emotional, romantic, erotic, and spiritual attraction toward another in relation to their own sex or gender (figure 2.11). The definition focuses on feelings rather than behaviors because individuals who identify with a minority sexual orientation experience are likely to experience significant stigma and oppression in our society for their behaviors (Flanders et al., 2016) . Sexual orientation exists on multiple continuums and crosses all dimensions of diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, first language, ability, religion, etc.).

Over time, gay, lesbian, asexual, and bisexual identities have extended to other sexual orientations, such as pansexual, polysexual, and fluid, and increasingly more research is being conducted on these populations (Kosciw et al., 2015).

Ability/Disability

Disabilities refer to visible or hidden and temporary or permanent conditions that provide barriers or challenges and impact individuals of every age and social group. Traditional views of disability follow a medical model, primarily explaining diagnoses and treatment models from a pathological perspective (Goodley & Lawthom, 2010). In this traditional approach, individuals diagnosed with a disability are often discussed as objects of study instead of complex individuals impacted by their environment. A **social model of ability**, which is the perspective of these authors, views diagnoses from a social and environmental perspective and considers multiple ecological levels, as shown in figure 2.12. The experiences of individuals are strongly valued.



Figure 2.12. Culture may impact the diagnosis of a disability. "20180611_Special Olympics_01687" by Special Olympics nationale Sommerspiele 2018. License: CC0 1.0.

It is important to consider how intersectionality impacts the experience of disability. For example, students of color and other underserved groups have a higher rate of diagnosis of learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disabilities, and intellectual disabilities (Artiles et al., 2010), which may be due to economic, historical, and social factors. Diagnosis must be considered as disabled youth are at a disadvantage, leading to more substantial disparities later in life.

Comprehension Self Check

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2.5: Social Stratification in Families

In order to understand family life in the United States, it can be helpful to identify the various levels of socioeconomic **status,** which include a person's or family's education level, income, career, and overall social status. The first chapter of this text identified some of the differences that individuals and families experience based on gender, sex, sexuality, race, immigration status, and ethnicity. Here we will focus on what the definitions and meanings are of socioeconomic status.

Geologists also use the word "stratification" to describe the distinct vertical layers found in rock (figure 2.13). **Social stratification**, or society's layers, made of people, represent the uneven distribution of society's resources. Society views the people with more resources as the top layer of the social structure of stratification. Other groups of people, with fewer and fewer resources, represent the lower layers. An individual's place within this stratification is called socioeconomic status.



Figure 2.13 Strata in rock illustrate social stratification. People are sorted, or layered, into levels of socioeconomic status. "Candy Cliffs Rock Strata" by Elizabeth B. Pearce. License: CC BY 4.0.

Most people and institutions in the United States indicate that they value equality, a belief that everyone has an equal chance at success. In other words, hard work and talent—not inherited wealth, prejudicial treatment, institutional racism, or societal values—determine **social mobility**, an individual's or family's movement through the class hierarchy due to changes in income, occupation, or wealth. This emphasis on choice, motivation, and self-effort perpetuates the American belief that people control their own social standing.

However, it is easy to see inequalities in social class. While inequalities exist between individuals, it's also important to be aware of larger social patterns. Sociologists look to see if individuals with similar backgrounds, group memberships, identities, and location in the country share the same social stratification. No individual, rich or poor, can be blamed for social inequalities, but all of us participate in a system where some rise and others fall. Most Americans believe the rising and falling is based on individual choices. But we will see how the structure of society affects a person's social standing and therefore is created and supported by society.

One key determinant of social standing is our parents. Parents tend to pass their social position on to their children. People inherit not only social standing but also the cultural norms, values, and beliefs that accompany a certain lifestyle. They share these with a network of friends and family members that provide resources and support. This is one of the reasons first-generation college students may not fare as well as other students (and that many colleges and universities currently focus on supporting these students). They lack access to the resources and support commonly provided to those whose parents have gone to college.

Other determinants are found in a society's occupational structure. Teachers, for example, often have high levels of education but receive lower pay than other professions with high levels of education. Many believe that teaching is a noble profession, so teachers should do their jobs for love of their profession and the good of their students—not for money. Yet the same attitude

is not applied to professional athletes, executives, or those working in corporate world. Cultural attitudes and beliefs like these support and perpetuate social and economic inequalities.

Social Classes in the United States

Categorizing **social class** is a fluid science. Sociologists generally identify three levels of class in the United States: upper, middle, and lower class. Within each class, there are many subcategories. Social class is closely related to socioeconomic status but focuses on wealth. Wealth is the most significant way of distinguishing classes, because wealth can be transferred to one's children and perpetuate the class structure.

The Pew Research Center defines classes based on the median household income. The lower class includes those whose income is two-thirds of the national median, the middle class includes those whose income falls between two-thirds and twice the median, and the upper class includes those whose income is above twice the national median (Kochhar, 2015).

A **sociological perspective** distinguishes the classes, in part, according to their relative power and control over their lives. Members of the upper class have power and control over their own lives, but their social status also gives them power and control over others' lives. The middle class doesn't generally control other strata of society, but its members do exert control over their own lives. In contrast, the lower class has little control over their work or lives. Let's look at the major divisions of U.S. social class and their key subcategories.

The upper class is considered the top, and only the powerful elite get to see the view from there. In the United States, people with extreme wealth make up 1% of the population, and they own roughly one-third of the country's wealth (Beeghley, 2008). As corporate leaders, members of the upper class make decisions that affect the job status of millions of people. As media owners, they influence the collective identity of the nation. As board members of the most influential colleges and universities, they influence cultural attitudes and values. As philanthropists, they establish foundations to support social causes they believe in. As campaign contributors and legislation drivers, they fund political campaigns, sometimes to protect their own economic interests.

Many people consider themselves middle class, but there are differing ideas about what that means. People with annual incomes of $150,000 call themselves middle class, as do people who annually earn $30,000. That helps explain why, in the United States, the middle class is broken into upper and lower subcategories. Lower-middle-class members tend to complete a two-year associate's degrees or a four-year bachelor's degree. They fill technical, lower-level management or administrative support positions. They generally don't have enough income to build significant savings. They can afford a decent, mainstream lifestyle, but they may struggle to maintain it.

Upper-middle-class people tend to continue on to postgraduate degrees. They study subjects such as business, management, law, or medicine. They work hard and live fairly comfortable lives. Upper-middle-class people tend to pursue careers, own their homes, and travel on vacation. Their children receive high-quality education and health care (Gilbert, 2010). Families within the middle class may have access to some wealth, but they also must work for an income to maintain this lifestyle.

People who have lower incomes are also referred to as the working class. Just like the middle and upper classes, the people in the lower class can be divided into subsets: the working class, the working poor, and the underclass. People from the lower economic class have less formal education and earn smaller incomes. They work jobs that require less training or experience than middle-class occupations and often do routine tasks under close supervision.

Working-class people, the highest subcategory of the lower class, often land steady jobs that are hands-on and can be physically demanding, such as landscaping, cooking, cleaning, or building. The working poor have unskilled, low-paying employment. These jobs rarely offer benefits such as health care or retirement planning, and their positions are often seasonal or temporary. They work as migrant farm workers, housecleaners, and day laborers.

How can people work full time and still be poor? Even working full time, millions of the working poor earn incomes too meager to support a family. The government requires employers to pay a minimum wage that varies from state to state, yet still leaves individuals and families below the poverty line. The real value of the federal minimum wage has dropped 17% since 2009 and 31% since 1968 (Cooper, Gould, & Zipperer, 2019).

The poorest of the poor, sometimes called the underclass, is the United States' lowest tier. The term itself and its classification of people have been questioned, and some prominent sociologists believe its use is either overgeneralizing or incorrect (Gans, 1991). But many experts recognize the growth of the underclass who live mainly in inner cities. They typically perform menial tasks

for little pay. Some of the people in this group are houseless. Many rely on welfare systems to provide food, medical care, and housing assistance, which still does not cover all their basic needs.

Social Mobility

People are often inspired and amazed at people's ability to overcome extremely difficult upbringings. Alice Coachman grew up with few resources and was denied access to training facilities because of her race; she ran barefoot and built her own high jump equipment before becoming the first Black athlete (and one of the first American track and field athletes) to win an Olympic gold medal. This is the kind of story told in documentaries or biographies meant to inspire, but relative to the overall population, the number of people who rise from poverty to become very successful is small, and the number that become wealthy is even smaller. Systemic barriers like unequal education, discrimination, and lack of opportunity can slow or diminish one's ability to move up in society.

Social mobility refers to the ability of individuals to change positions within a social stratification system. When people improve or diminish their economic status in a way that affects social class, they experience social mobility. Upward mobility refers to an increase—or upward shift—when they move from a lower to a higher socioeconomical class. In contrast, individuals experience downward mobility when they move from higher socioeconomic class to a lower one. Some people move downward because of business setbacks, divorce, unemployment, or illness.

Structural mobility happens when societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the social class ladder. In the first half of the 20th century, industrialization expanded the U.S. economy, raising the standard of living and leading to upward structural mobility for almost everyone. In the first few decades of the 21st century, recessions and the outsourcing of jobs overseas have contributed to the withdrawal of Americans from the workforce (BLS, 2021). Many people experienced economic setbacks, creating a wave of downward structural mobility.

Changing Economics Effects on Families

In the last century, the United States saw a steady rise in its standard of living, the level of wealth available to acquire the material necessities and comforts to maintain a specific lifestyle. The country's standard of living is based on factors such as income, employment, class, literacy rates, mortality rates, poverty rates, and housing affordability. A country with a high standard of living has a high quality of life, which in the United States means residents can afford a home, own a car, build savings, and take vacations. Ultimately, standard of living is shaped by the wealth and distribution of wealth in a country and the expectations its citizens have for their lifestyle.

In the United States, a small portion of the population has access to the highest standard of living:

- The wealthiest 1% of the U.S. population holds one-third of the nation's wealth;
- The top 50% to 90% hold almost two-thirds of the nation's wealth;
- The bottom 50% hold only 2% of the nation's wealth (The Federal Reserve, 2021).

Although the middle class is still significantly larger than the lower and upper classes, it shrank from 69% in 1971 to 51% in 2020. Arguably the most significant threat to the United States' relatively high standard of living is this decline of the middle class. The wealth of the middle class has also been declining; its share of the nation's wealth fell from 32% in 1983 to 16% in 2016 (Horowitz, Igielnik, & Kochhar, 2020).

People with wealth often receive the most and best schooling, access better health care, and consume the most goods and services. In addition, wealthy people also wield decision-making power over their daily life because money gives them access to better resources. Many lower-income individuals receive less education, have inadequate health care, and have less influence over the circumstances of their everyday lives.

Additionally, tens of millions of women and men struggle to pay rent, buy food, find work, and afford basic medical care. Poverty is an economic condition in which a family or individuals have an income of 50% less than the average median income. This income is sometimes called the poverty level or the **poverty line**. In 2021, for example, the poverty line was set at $12,880 for one individual, $17,420 for a couple, and $26,500 for a family of four (ASPE, 2021).

Women who are single heads of household tend to have a lower income and lower standard of living than their married or single male counterparts. This is a worldwide phenomenon known as the feminization of poverty—which acknowledges that women disproportionately make up the majority of individuals in poverty across the globe and have a lower standard of living. In the

United States, women make up approximately 56% of Americans living in poverty. One in four unmarried mothers lives in poverty (Bleiweis, 2020).

As a wealthy developed country, the United States invests in resources to provide the basic necessities to those in need through a series of federal and state social welfare programs. These programs provide food, medical, and cash assistance. One of the best-known programs is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. This program began in the Great Depression, when unmarketable or surplus food was distributed to the hungry. It was not formalized until 1961, when a pilot food stamp program began and became formalized by the passage of the federal Food Stamp Act in 1964. In 1965, more than 500,000 individuals received food assistance. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, participation reached 43 million people.

These resources are important for survival, but they do not provide enough assistance to help people achieve social mobility.

To think more about how poverty intersects with other social characteristics complete the activity “Social Location Impacts Families” in the “Going Deeper” section.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=833#h5p-11

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2.6: Theories, Perspectives, and Key Concepts

We will examine families from a variety of theories and perspectives. A **theory** is not just an idea that someone has but rather a structural framework, explanation, or tool that has been tested and evaluated over time. Theories are developed and put into practice through scholarship, research, discussion, and debate. Theories help us to understand the world in general and, in this instance, the ways in which families form, function, and interact with and experience the world.

Perspectives are similar to theories in that they are also important ways of understanding families and the world. They differ in that they may be more focused on understanding the relationships among ideas or on presenting a framework, rather than a single scientific hypothesis accompanied by research.

Because the study of families overlaps multiple disciplines, this text introduces sociological, human development, psychological, and anthropological theories and concepts. Figure 2.14 is a summary of seven of the theories that are important to understanding families.

Theories Used in Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens



Figure 2.14. While you are learning about families, several theories will be introduced here and throughout the text. These theories and perspectives can give you a lens through which to understand how families are similar and different from families in the past and in other countries. Image description. "Theories" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi-Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0.

Figure 2.15 is a summary table of the seven core theories used to study families in this textbook:

- Ecological systems theory
- Exchange (aka social exchange) theory
- Feminist (aka feminism) theory
- Life course perspective
- Postmodernism (aka modernity) perspective
- Structural diversity framework
- Symbolic interaction theory

For a more complete table of theories and perspectives that are used to study families in the fields of psychology, sociology, and human development and family sciences, see Appendix A.

Figure 2.15. These foundational theories related to the study of families are those most emphasized in this text. "Core Theories" by Elizabeth B. Pearce. License: CC BY 4.0.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts
Ecological Systems	Individuals are part of a group of concentric systems that impact their development and growth.	Children are influenced by the people and environments in which they spend the most time, as well as greater social events, trends, and values.	Micro, meso, exo, macro, and chronosystems.
Exchange (aka Social Exchange)	Individuals have different strengths, resources, and weaknesses and enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits and costs.	Emphasizes the motivation for familial relationships: that each person is giving and gaining within the family.	The "breadwinner-homemaker family" is one classic example, in which one partner cares for the children and the home in exchange with another partner who earns money for the home and family.
Feminist (aka Feminism)	Society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; this theory works to understand and transform inequalities.	This theory emphasizes the way that gender roles are constructed within the family, including the socialization of children.	Gender differences are mostly socially constructed. This theory draws on the conflict, exchange, and symbolic interaction perspectives.
Life Course	This approach examines how individuals, in the context of their birth cohorts and their families, are shaped by significant social and historical events.	Humans are interdependent, and this theory emphasizes family life as a way of experiencing and interpreting world events such as wars, natural disasters, pandemics, and economic depressions. In particular, attention is paid to how children and adolescents in a given cohort will be impacted in adulthood.	Emerging early adulthood: the period of life when people shift into adulthood as they end their education, start a career, and begin families. This period of life has become more varied and complex because of societal change.
Postmodernism (aka Modernity)	Choice and individuality are emphasized; there is a diversity of human experience and perspectives. Humans are able to act in the way they choose within society and institutions.	Individuals have a much greater choice than they did in the past about how they form their families, the roles they play, and who is in their family. History, family, and tradition have decreasing roles in family life.	Reflexivity: the way in which people take in new information, reflect upon it, and adjust and act with new knowledge with a skepticism toward the reality of one universal truth.
Structural Diversity	This approach examines the close connections between the inner workings of families and the social structures that shape all families but in different ways.	Family diversity is constructed through interactions with social structures as well as the individual actions of family members.	Social location: Families are affected by the intersections of class, race, and gender, which place them in differing social locations. Human agency: the active shaping of family life by individual action.
Symbolic Interaction	Focuses on the changing nature of cultural symbols and the ways we interact with one another based on those symbols. Humans see themselves through the eyes of others, and this affects the ways they behave.	Changing roles, symbols, and societal expectations affect the ways family members interact with each other and influence future generations.	The ways we interpret shared understandings influences our interactions and responses.

Watch the video in figure 2.16 to hear examples and more discussion of five of these theories. The theories that are not included are discussed more in-depth elsewhere: structural diversity at the beginning of this chapter and life course at the end in the Looking Ahead section.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 2.16. Theories and Concepts [YouTube Video]. This video introduces social exchange theory, symbolic interactionism, feminist, life course, and postmodern theory. (It is recommended that you play it at 1.25x speed and disregard the references to chapter numbers.) Transcript. "Theories and Concepts" © Liz Pearce. License Terms: Standard YouTube License.

Comprehension Self Check

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Licenses and Attributions for Theories, Perspectives, and Key Concepts

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2.7: What Is a Social Problem?

A **social problem** is any condition or behavior that has negative consequences for large numbers of people and that is generally recognized as a condition or behavior that needs to be addressed systemically. It cannot be solved by an individual; institutional or societal responses are needed. This definition has both an objective component and a subjective component.

The objective component is this: for any condition or behavior to be considered a social problem, it must have negative consequences for large numbers of people. How do we know if a social problem has negative consequences? Reasonable people can disagree on whether such consequences exist and on the seriousness of consequences, but a body of data accumulates—from academic researchers, government agencies, and other sources—that strongly points to extensive consequences.

Consider, for example, the case of climate change, defined as changes in the earth's climate due to the buildup of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Although the majority of climate scientists say that climate change is real and serious, the percentage of Americans who agree with scientists is lower. In a 2011 poll, 64% said they "think that global warming is happening" (Leiserowitz et al., 2011). While the majority of Americans believe in 2020 that climate change is a social problem (Tyson & Kennedy, 2020), there is still a discrepancy between the scientific community and the public's view. Social identity and location influence viewpoints, according to Gallup polls that have found that people in the west and northeast (McCarthy, 2019), as well as younger adults (Reinhart, 2018), are more likely to believe that climate change is at least partially caused by human behavior and needs to be addressed.

This type of dispute points to the subjective component: there must be a perception that the condition or behavior needs to be addressed for it to be considered a social problem, and that viewpoint can change over time and location. This component lies at the heart of the social constructionist view of social problems (Rubington & Weinberg, 2010). In this view, many types of negative conditions and behaviors exist. Many of these are considered sufficiently negative to acquire the status of a social problem; some do not receive this consideration and thus do not become a social problem, and some become considered a social problem only if citizens, policymakers, or other parties call attention to the condition or behavior.

The history of attention given to rape and sexual assault in the United States before and after the 1970s provides an example of this latter situation, as shown in figure 2.17. Acts of sexual violence against women are not a new occurrence and certainly were common in the United States before the 1970s. Although men were sometimes arrested and prosecuted for rape and sexual assault, sexual violence was otherwise ignored by legal policymakers and received little attention in college textbooks, and the news media, and many people thought that rape and sexual assault were just something that happened (Allison & Wrightsman, 1993). Thus, although sexual violence existed, it was not considered a social problem. When the contemporary women's movement began in the late 1970s, it soon focused on rape and sexual assault as serious crimes and as manifestations of women's inequality. Thanks to this focus, rape and sexual assault eventually entered the public consciousness, views of these crimes began to change, and legal policymakers began to give them more attention. In short, sexual violence against women became a social problem.



Figure 2.17. Before the 1970s, rape and sexual assault certainly existed and were very common, but they were generally ignored and not considered a social problem. When the contemporary women's movement arose during the 1970s, it focused on sexual violence against women and turned this behavior into a social problem. "Placards at the Rally to Take Rape Seriously" by Women's ENews. License: CC BY 2.0.

The changing view of rape reflects the social constructionist nature of social problems. It also reflects the dynamic in which men have held more power to shape societal views. This raises an interesting question: When is a social problem a social problem? According to some sociologists who adopt this view, negative conditions and behaviors are not a social problem unless they are recognized as such by policymakers, large numbers of lay citizens, or other segments of our society as shown in figure 2.18; these sociologists would thus say that rape and sexual assault before the 1970s were not social problems because our society as a whole paid them little attention. Other sociologists say that negative conditions and behaviors should be considered a social problem even if they receive little or no attention; these sociologists would thus say that rape and sexual assault before the 1970s were social problems.



Figure 2.18. A social problem emerges when a social change group successfully calls attention to a condition. Protests like the one pictured here raise the environmental consciousness of Americans and help put pressure on businesses to be environmentally responsible. "Financing Climate Change" by Visible Hand. License: CC BY 2.0.

The Sociological Imagination and Social Problems

Many individuals experience one or more social problems personally. For example, many people are poor and unemployed;

many are in poor health; and many have family problems, drink too much alcohol, or commit crimes. When we hear about these individuals, it is easy to think that their problems are theirs alone and that they and other individuals with the same problems are entirely to blame for their difficulties.

Sociology takes a different approach, as it stresses that individual problems are often rooted in problems stemming from aspects of society itself. Personal troubles refer to a problem affecting individuals that the affected individual, as well as other members of society, typically blames on the individual's own personal and moral failings. Examples include such different problems as eating disorders, divorce, and unemployment. Problems in society thus help account for problems that many individuals experience. Mills felt that many problems ordinarily considered private troubles are best understood as social problems, and he coined the term "sociological imagination" to refer to the ability to appreciate the structural basis for individual problems.

Let's use our sociological imaginations to understand a contemporary social problem: eating disorders. Society often views eating disorders as a lifestyle choice rather than a social problem. This belief neglects the larger social and cultural forces that help explain such disorders. For example, most Americans with eating disorders are women, not men. This gender difference forces us to ask what it is about being a woman in American society that makes eating disorders more common. Let's look at the standard of beauty for women that emphasizes a slender body (Boyd et al., 2011). If this cultural standard did not exist, would fewer American women suffer from eating disorders than do now? Studies have shown that young women are at higher risk of developing eating disorders if they've internalized cultural expectations of thinness and perfection (Izydorczyk & Sitnik-Warchulska, 2018). Viewed in this way, eating disorders are best understood as a public issue, not as a personal trouble.

To help us understand a "blaming the victim" ideology, let's consider why children from low-income, under-resourced urban areas often learn very little in their schools. According to psychologist William Ryan, a "blaming the victim" approach would say the children's parents do not care about their learning, fail to teach them good study habits, and do not encourage them to take school seriously (Ryan, 1976). This type of explanation, he wrote, may apply to some parents. Still, it ignores a much more important reason: the sad shape of America's urban schools, which, he said, are overcrowded, decrepit structures housing old textbooks and out-of-date equipment. To improve the schooling of children in urban areas, he wrote, we must improve the schools themselves and not just try to "improve" the parents.

As this example suggests, a "blaming the victim" approach points to solutions to social problems such as poverty and illiteracy that are very different from those suggested by a more structural approach that blames the system. If we blame the victim, we will spend our limited dollars to address the personal failings of individuals who suffer from poverty, illiteracy, poor health, eating disorders, and other difficulties. If instead we blame the system, we would focus our attention on the various social conditions (decrepit schools, cultural standards of female beauty, and the like) that account for these difficulties. A sociological understanding suggests that the latter approach is ultimately needed to help us deal successfully with the social problems facing us today.

Comprehension Self Check

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2.8: Looking Ahead- Life Course Theory and COVID-19

Because human development and family sciences is an interdisciplinary field, it uses theories and perspectives from a variety of disciplines. As a student in an introductory course using this book, it is unlikely that you will be asked to master multiple theories. It is, however, important that you attempt to understand and apply what you are learning about contemporary families to several theoretical frameworks. Look to see which theories or perspectives you find most relevant.

It is also the case that depending on societal events and changes, theories may seem more applicable at one time than another. For example, the most developed research related to the life course theory is based on World War II, one of the most impactful worldwide events in our history. While this might not feel as relatable to current students, it can be argued that the current COVID-19 pandemic may have as much and as many effects on the Millennial and Gen Z birth cohorts as World War II had on the Greatest Generation birth cohort.

In fact, a leading team of life course perspective scholars have already proposed a framework for studying the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. While acknowledging that there is much that is unknown, they discuss two distinct aspects: having COVID-19 or being close to someone who has it and being affected by the overall cultural, economic, social, and psychological effects of the disease and the pandemic. They also note that positionality in terms of age, location, and life transition may differentiate the effects of the pandemic on an individual's life course. The authors of "Understanding the Effects of Covid-19 through a Life Course Lens" wrote in 2020:

> Looking forward, a life course perspective also asks us to identify which pandemic experiences will turn into permanent scars or reorientations for individuals and their families, and which will be open to resilience and be compensated for or even forgotten with time. Even more, it encourages researchers to...account for environment and policy considerations by specifying the conditions under which there will be scarring or resilience.
>
> ...[I]t is important to not only probe these dynamics at an individual level of analyses, but also to examine them for groups, especially birth cohorts or social generations. In historical moments like this, people of different ages are branded differently.
>
> The pandemic is reshaping transitions and trajectories in every domain of life, and instigating turning points that redirect life. Many of these are negative, or at least challenging. The transition to adulthood, for example, has become longer, more variable, and risk-laden in many countries in recent decades. The pandemic is likely to heighten these trends through its effects on educational transitions, youth labor markets, chances for regional mobility, family formation, and general trust in the future. Likewise, at the other end of working life, the transition to retirement may become more difficult due to insecure pensions or insufficient savings or assets, just as leisure and volunteering activities or the grandparent role may become more difficult due to limited mobility or concerns about exposure to Covid-19. Indeed, throughout the life course, the age-based rhythm of many transitions may loosen in the face of uncertainty and de-standardize life trajectories (Settersten et al., 2020).

Can you see the ways that these authors are applying an equity lens to the pandemic? While we don't have the data and ability to look at generational effects from the future, we can study the theory and the research and speculate about what future researchers may find. In addition, governments and other social structures have the opportunity to prepare policies and practices that will ameliorate potential negative consequences for large cohorts of people.

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2.9: Going Deeper

Now that you have been introduced to concepts that will help you learn about all families, this section has some resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, there are activities that may be used in the classroom or as assignments.

Want to Learn More?

- A guide to cultural humility is offered by Culturally Connected.
- Read more about Nicole Maines challenging her elementary school's restroom policy here.
- Read more about Rachel Dolezal, the woman born to White parents who identifies as Black, in this article from Time magazine
- To read about the growing and diverse groups of Asian Americans, read this Pew Research Center summary.
- *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?* (a seven-part documentary) can help us understand intersectionality by focusing on the connection between social class, racism, and health.

Here are two websites if you would like to learn about how social justice is defined and how to contribute to greater social justice in the United States:

- Center for Economic and Social Justice
- The San Diego Foundation: What is Social Justice?

Reflective Questions

1. What can you expect to learn from studying families?
2. How will studying families impact your family and your work life in the future?
3. What are the main methods for researching families? What are their weaknesses and strengths?
4. How will cultural humility help you understand other people?
5. What is an equity lens?
6. What are the major theoretical perspectives? Which ones make the most sense to you?
7. What is a social problem? What social problems have you experienced or observed?
8. How will having a sociological imagination and understanding equity equip you to learn about families in the United States?

Key Terms

- **Age:** the developmental changes and transitions that come with being a child, adolescent, or adult.
- **Cultural humility:** the focus on staying other-centered in order to learn about and understand the experiences and viewpoints of people with social identities different from your own.
- **Culture:** the shared meanings and shared experiences passed down over time by individuals in a group.
- **Disabilities:** the visible or hidden and temporary or permanent conditions that create barriers or challenges in one's life.
- **Experiments:** a primary form of research in natural and physical sciences that involves comparing and contrasting at least

two different interventions.
- **First language:** the language learned in early childhood.
- **Gender:** a socially constructed expression of a person's sexual identity which influences the status, roles, and norms for their behavior.
- **Objectivity:** the act of staying free from the influence of personal experiences and opinions.
- **Observational studies:** a type of field research that includes both participant observation and nonparticipant observation.
- **Origin:** the geographical location where a person was born and spent (at least) their early years in.
- **Qualitative research:** the descriptive, in-depth study of a topic.
- **Quantitative research:** the numbers-based, measurable study of a topic.
- **Race:** the categorization of humans using observable physical or biological criteria, such as skin color, hair color or texture, facial features, etc.
- **Research:** a systematic investigation into a particular topic, examining materials, sources, and/or behaviors.
- **Scientific process:** the process of formulating hypotheses, making observations, gathering and testing data, drawing conclusions, and modifying hypotheses.
- **Secondary data analysis:** the study of existing research.
- **Sex:** a biological descriptor involving chromosomes and internal/external reproductive organs.
- **Sexual orientation:** a person's emotional, romantic, erotic, and spiritual attractions toward another in relation to their own sex or gender.
- **Socioeconomic class:** a person's income or material wealth, educational status, and/or occupational status.
- **Social class:** similar to socioeconomic status with a closer focus on income and wealth.
- **Sociological perspective:** viewpoints that emphasize causes, effects, and actions of groups of individuals, looking for patterns.
- **Social mobility:** an individual's or family's movement through the class hierarchy due to changes in income, occupation, or wealth.
- **Social model of ability:** a view of diagnoses from a social and environmental perspective that considers multiple ecological levels.
- **Social problem:** a large issue that affects many people, can threaten the health and well-being of society, is recognized as a problem by many, includes multiple causes and effects, and needs a systemic solution.
- **Social stratification:** society's layers, made of people, represent the uneven distribution of society's resources.
- **Structural mobility:** societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the social class ladder.
- **Subjective:** influenced by personal experiences and opinions.
- **Survey:** a method by which sociologists gather their data by asking questions.
- **Theory:** a structural framework, explanation, or tool that has been tested and evaluated over time.

Activity: Social Location Impacts Families

Chapter two more fully spells out the social characteristics that are a part of our social identities (e.g., gender, age, sexuality, etc.), a concept introduced in Chapter One. In Figure 2.19, you will see dozens of examples of the ways our social identities contribute to real consequences for families.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 2.19 Social Construction of Difference [YouTube Video]. If you are grappling with understanding the social construction of difference, this 10-minute video will provide you with lots of current and specific examples of the ways that socially constructed differences impact individuals and families. Transcript. "Social Construction of Difference" by Elizabeth B. Pearce, Kimberly Puttman, and Colin Stapp and Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0.

Discussion Questions

1. This video pulls together the concepts of social identities and the social construction of difference, concepts that were introduced in Chapter one. How are these two ideas related?
2. This video introduces the idea of social location. Discuss the definition of social location by explaining how socially constructed differences lead to each of us having a unique social location.
3. How does the assigning of value to difference impact individuals and families? Discuss laws, regulations, or practices that lead to real consequences of socially constructed differences.

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CHAPTER 3: CONNECTION, COMMUNITY, LOVE, AND PARTNERING

Learning Objectives

1. Using a theory, describe the need for connection through community and intimate relationships.
2. Explain the relationships between family, social support, and kinship groups.
3. Explain the differences between sex, gender, and sexuality.
4. Discuss the ways that changes in gender and sexuality affect intimate and family relationships.
5. Describe the interpersonal and societal factors that influence union formations.
6. Describe the most likely contributing factors to the increase in divorce from the 1960s forward.
7. Analyze union formations and dissolutions from an equity perspective.
8. Apply theoretical concepts related to choosing a partner(s) to your own observations and experiences.

3.1: Chapter Reading Guide

3.2: Introduction to Connection, Love, and Community

3.3: Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

3.4: Love and Union Formation

3.5: A Word about Marriage

3.6: Societal and Personal Influences on Union Formations

3.7: Union Dissolution and Divorce

3.8: Looking Ahead- Kinship and Health

3.9: Going Deeper

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3.1: Chapter Reading Guide

This chapter is all about the connections that people make, those intimate relationships that we expect to last for a long time, if not indefinitely. You'll get more exposure to theories about love and community and a basic understanding of sex, gender, and sexuality. Romantic partnerships and breakups, including marriage and divorce, are big topics in family studies. You learned about your sociological imagination in Chapter 2; now it is time to practice using it.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Assortative mating:** the tendency to choose intimate mates who are more like oneself.
- **Binary:** a social construct composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites.
- **Chosen families:** nonbiological kinship bonds, whether legally recognized or not, deliberately chosen for the purpose of mutual support and love.
- **Cisgender:** a person who identifies in accordance with their gender assignment.
- **Companionate marriage:** in addition to economic stability, these marriages also have an expectation of love, affection, friendship, and sexual fidelity and satisfaction.
- **Gender:** a socially constructed expression of a person's sexual identity which influences the status, roles, and norms for their behavior.
- **Hierarchy of needs theories:** a framework articulated by multiple Indigenous groups that emphasizes self-actualization not just of the individual but of the community as the most primary of needs.
- **Homophobia:** fear, hatred, or prejudice toward gay people.
- **Individualized marriage:** responsibilities and roles are more fluid and the enhancement of individual well-being and psychological growth is added to expectations.
- **Intersex:** a variation in sex characteristics, such as chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals.
- **Intimate relationships:** characterized by mutual trust, caring, and acceptance and often imply a romantic or sexual relationship.
- **Institutionalized marriage:** a relationship in which roles are clearly defined between the man and the woman in the pursuit of economic and familial stability.
- **Polyamory:** having intimate relationships with more than one person at a time.
- **Sexuality:** the pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction to others in relation to one's own gender identity.
- **Stigma:** a negative or discriminatory attitude based on a social characteristic or behavior.
- **Transgender people:** individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.
- **Union formation:** an intimate relationship, in which two or more people commit to some kind of union, including marriage.

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3.2: Introduction to Connection, Love, and Community

Elizabeth B. Pearce; Wesley Sharp; Nyssa Cronin; and Matt Bockheim

> A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.
> —Albert Einstein, in a letter he wrote to a rabbi who was grieving the loss of his child (Sullivan, 1972)

The need for, and benefits of, emotional and social connection to other human beings is one of the central foundations of family life. The quote speaks to the tension among Western, Eastern, and Indigenous views about individuality and collectivism. Einstein refers to the "optical delusion" (what we might call a social construction) of seeing ourselves as separate beings from others and the natural world. Increasing layers of research, however, speak to the importance of close social relationships (belongingness and connectedness) as well as the wider circle of social networks (Seppala et al., 2013).

Theorists who discuss families, parenting, and mate selection rely on an underlying principle: the mutual social and emotional interdependence of human beings that fosters family development and growth. This aligns with the private function of families, discussed in Chapter 1. In addition, our ability to connect to the greater society and planet, including those who are less similar or unrelated to us, enhances our care for family and community. An emphasis of this text is the disposition of being willing to listen and learn about the greater community in which we live.

As we discuss social connection, we are referring to qualities and experiences such as:

- Positive relationships with others in the social world
- Attachment (an affectionate emotional connection with at least one other)
- A feeling of belonging and a lack of feeling of exclusion
- Social support, which includes connection but may also include informational support, appraisal support (such as personal feedback and/or affirmation), and/or practical support (such as money or labor)
- The act of nurturing and being nurtured
- An individual's perception of all of the above

It matters most to the individual what they perceive as connection and support and less how others would view it.

Theoretical Perspectives that Emphasize Connection

These theories emphasize the importance of our connections with others. It is believed that systems of support are critical to individual and family well-being.

The **ecological systems theory** was developed by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner to explain how environments affect a child's or individual's growth and development. The model is typically illustrated with six concentric circles that represent the individual, environments, and interactions (see Chapter 4, figure 4.4). Bronfenbrenner's model shows the individual at the center of concentric circles that represent all the people and places in that person's life. The outer circles include the community values and norms, as well as the person's location in time and geography.

There are **hierarchy of needs theories** created by multiple Indigenous groups and best documented by the Blackfoot Nation in North America that emphasize the self-actualization of not just the individual but of the community as the most primary of needs (figure 3.1, right.) Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory includes the emotional need for affection and loving connections to others once basic physiological and biological needs are met (figure 3.1, left.)

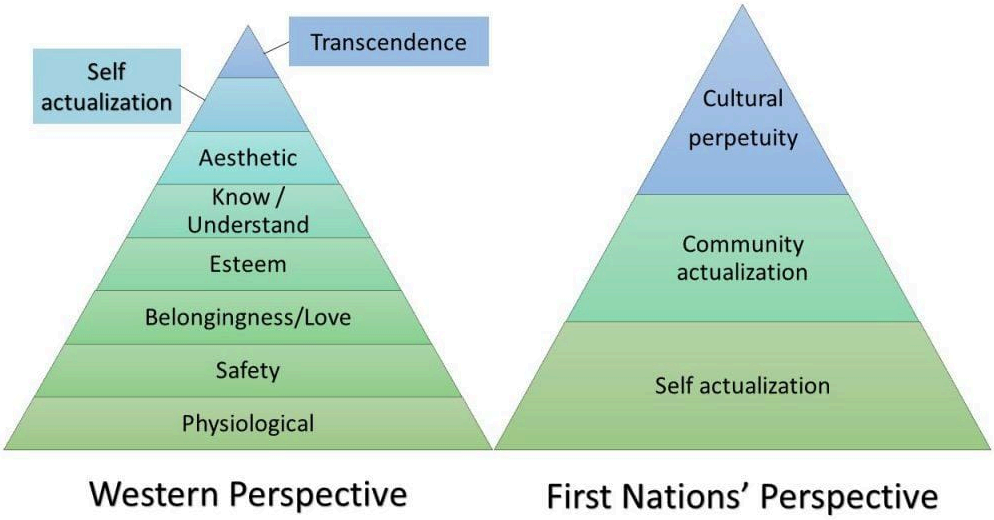


Figure 3.1. This graphic compares Maslow's hierarchy of needs and First Nations perspectives. Image description. "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Compared to the First Nations Perspective" by Michaela Willi-Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on research from Rethinking Learning by Barbara Bray.

In 1938, Maslow spent time with the Blackfoot Nation (link to archival photograph) in Canada prior to releasing his hierarchy of needs theory. It is believed that he based the tipi-like structure on the Blackfoot ideas but westernized the focus to be on the individual rather than on the community (Bray, 2019).

If we look more closely at the representation of Blackfoot ideas, it can be seen that the well-being of the individual, the family, and the community are based on connectedness, the closeness that we experience with family and friends, and the prosocial extension that we provide to others in our communities and in the world. In addition, this model focuses on time; the top of the tipi is cultural perpetuity, and it symbolizes a community's culture lasting forever.

Maslow's theory is of value, but the mislabeling of it as a theory of human development rather than as a Western cultural theory of human development mistakenly applies what Maslow observed to all human beings. Bringing theories from other cultures and geographical regions forward helps us understand the variety of ways that human beings develop and recognize the value of the diversity of family experiences and beliefs.

Social Support Networks

Human connectedness and prosocial relationships are increasingly associated with better health outcomes and longevity. The World Health Organization now lists "Social Support Networks" as a determinant of health. Their webpage notes that a person's social environment, including culture and community beliefs, is a key determinant in overall health (World Health Organization, 2020). Public health officials are working to move forward with the prioritization of social connections as a part of public health efforts in the United States. They propose examining current evidence and research, conducting additional research, and creating a consensus process amongst experts related to social connectedness (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2017).

It seems that once we feel connected to others, a more familial sense of belonging can develop, which benefits individuals and the greater community. This research supports the belief systems of Indigenous peoples, such as the Blackfoot Nation, and Eastern philosophies that see a reciprocal relationship between the good of the community, the planet, and individuals.

Kinship and Extended Kinship

Kinship, as discussed in Chapter 1, refers to the broader social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships. Kinship acknowledges that individuals have a role in defining who is a member of their own family and how familial relationships extend across both vertical and horizontal lines. For example, in families with multiple living generations, there is the possibility of close relationships between young children, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Families who have large sibling groups can have family reunions that include dozens or

even hundreds of people. These relationships are called extended kinship or extended families and can also include non-blood or legal relatives as designated by the kinship group.

We will use the terms “kinships” or “kinship groups” interchangeably with “families” to remind ourselves of this broader definition (figure 3.2).

According to *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Marriage, Family, and Couples Counseling*, “**chosen families** are nonbiological kinship bonds, whether legally recognized or not, deliberately chosen for the purpose of mutual support and love” (Carlson & Dermer, 2019). Chosen family is an option for every individual, although it has historically been associated with the LGBTQIA+ culture. People who identify as lesbian, gay, or other stigmatized identities have sometimes been disowned by families who do not accept these identities and, therefore, do not accept their children (or other family members).

In Focus: Leaving a Family Behind, but Not Really

My first family is now 1,500 miles away and full of life. I chose to leave it all behind, and sure, we still talk from time to time, but all long-distance relationships are hard. Now I have a new family, one that I chose. Thinking about all that has led me here, I realize it was no one’s fault—perhaps I was just too different from them. I am a deep introvert, and they are definitely extroverts. We just never really connected. This is alright. My wife was the first person I truly connected with, and when I met her, I knew she was the family I needed and wanted.



Figure 3.2. Connection to other people is a foundational need that can be met through extended kinship groups or chosen families. Photograph by Priscilla Du Preez. License: Unsplash License.

Chosen families can be for anyone of any background who desires to connect through kinship bonds with others who are not legally or blood-related individuals. The chosen family can meet, or supplement needs not sufficiently met by the biological or otherwise traditionally structured family. In some cases, people are ostracized from their family of origin and are denied a sense of belonging. Others may be living away from their biological families due to schooling, immigration, employment, legal restrictions, migration, or other reasons.

In addition, both chosen families and extended kinship relationships may be created through hardship. As described in Chapter 1, enslaved Black people found ways to create kinship ties among the hostile living conditions that separated them from biological and legal family members. Native Americans and immigrant groups facing oppressive laws and policies continued to foster familial and kinship connections within communities. Chosen families are created for a variety of reasons, and it is important to see them through the lenses of love, connection, nurturance, and equity.

In this chapter, we will focus on the romantic, sexual, and partnership unions that people make by starting with an overview of sex, gender, and sexuality. Chapter 4 will focus more on parenting and other caregiving aspects of family life.

Comprehension Self Check

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3.3: Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Sex, gender, and sexuality are central to family life. Not only are they all involved in the partner(s) that we choose, but the construction of behaviors and roles related to gender are impactful to the operation of family life. Before we discuss their meanings, we will first acknowledge the socially constructed binary systems that influence society's thinking about these topics.

Socially Constructed Binary Systems

Black and White. Masculine and feminine. Rich and poor. Straight and gay. Able-bodied and disabled. These are binaries.

A **binary** is a social construct composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites. Binary systems reflect how this idea has become embedded in our culture, creating an exaggeration of differences between social groups until they seem to have nothing in common. An example of this is the phrase "men are from Mars, women are from Venus." Ideas of men and women being complete opposites invite simplistic comparisons that rely on stereotypes: men are practical, women are emotional; men are strong, women are weak; men lead, women support. Binary notions mask the complicated realities and variety of unique human beings. They also erase the existence of individuals, such as multiracial or mixed-race people and people with nonbinary gender identities, who may identify with neither of the assumed categories or with multiple categories.

We know very well that men have emotions and that women have physical strength, but a binary perspective of gender prefigures men and women to have nothing in common. They are defined against each other; men are defined, in part, as "not women" and women as "not men." Thus, our understanding of men is influenced by our understanding of women. Rather than seeing aspects of identity like race, gender, class, ability, and sexuality as containing only two opposing categories, conceptualizing multiple various identities allows us to examine how men and women, Black and White, and the like may not be so completely different after all, and how varied and complex identities and lives can be.

Understanding Sex and Gender

Although the words "sex" and "gender" are at times used interchangeably in social settings, scientists and sociologists make a clear distinction between these two terms. As we discussed in Chapter 2, a person's sex refers to the biological category based on anatomy and physiology. This category is assigned at birth, most typically as male or female. A small percentage of the population (less than 1%) is born as **intersex**, meaning that there is a combination of primary and secondary sex characteristics that indicate both male and female features. In these situations, parents and medical professionals work together to make a decision about which sex to assign and whether any surgery is warranted. In the past, it was common for surgery decisions to be made by the doctor and parents as early as possible. But as scientific evidence and individual choice about gender have both evolved, this practice is now being questioned.

Gender, on the other hand, is the social expression of a person's sexual identity. While sex is biological, gender has a biological component but is influenced by society. Each person develops their own gender identity. In the past, a binary gender system was accepted, meaning that people typically identified as male or female. You may be aware of people who identify as nonbinary, basically meaning that a person sees the binary system as too rigid and feels that their gender cannot be defined within a binary system. Gender expression is the pattern of behaviors that a person exhibits in the social world, especially as it relates to behaviors typically associated with boys/men, girls/women, or nonbinary people. Ideas about gender evolve over time, which reminds us that it is a social construction.

A popular phenomenon that began in 2008, gender reveal parties, is really about biological sex. At these events, parents-to-be gather with friends and family to reveal whether their in-utero fetus is a girl or a boy. Typically, the socially constructed ideas of color (pink for a girl and blue for a boy) are used to symbolize the sex of the baby. A cake, smoke bombs, balloons, or other festive objects are used to reveal the sex by cutting into the cake, releasing the smoke bombs or balloons, and so forth (figure 3.3). Often, the parents are surprised as well, having delivered the concealed medical information to a baker or event planner in advance.



Figure 3.3. This cake will be cut open at a key point in the gender reveal party to inform all of the guests of the baby's sex. Would it be more accurate to call it a "sex reveal party"? "Gender Revealing Party" by mastermaq. License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

As you can see, sex and gender are relevant to each other, but they have differing meanings. Because these terms often get confused, basic definitions are provided to highlight the basic differences.

Sex: One's biological identity, based on anatomy and physiology, is female, male, or intersex.

Gender: The social expression of one's biological sex. This includes gender identity, or which gender one identifies with, which can encompass women, men, nonbinary, and other developing terms, as well as gender expression, which is one's outward expression of behaviors related to a gender category.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression

A binary gender perspective assumes that only men and women exist, obscuring gender diversity and erasing the existence of people who do not identify as men or women. A gendered assumption in our culture is that someone assigned female at birth will identify as a woman and that all women are assigned female at birth. While this is true for **cisgender** (or "cis") individuals—people who identify in accordance with their gender assignment—it is not the case for everyone. Some people assigned males at birth identify as women, some people assigned females identify as men, and some people identify as neither women nor men. This illustrates the difference between the assignment of biological sex, which doctors place on infants (and fetuses) based on the appearance of genitalia, and gender identity, which one discerns about oneself. The existence of **transgender people**, or individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, challenges the very idea of a single-sex/gender identity.

Transgender people may or may not have surgeries or hormone therapies to change their physical bodies, but in many cases, they experience a change in their social gender identities. They may identify as nonbinary, gender fluid, or genderqueer, for example. Some may use gender-neutral pronouns, such as they/them, rather than the gendered pronouns she/her or he/his. As pronouns and gender identities are not visible, trans communities initiated a way of communicating gender pronouns by verbally asking and stating one's pronouns (Nordmarken, 2013). These practices have gradually been adopted by the general public.

The existence of sex variations fundamentally challenges the notion of a binary biological sex. Intersex describes variation in sex characteristics, such as chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals that do not fit typical definitions of what is culturally considered "male" or "female." "Intersex," like "female" and "male," is a socially constructed category that humans have created to label bodies that they view as different from those they would classify as distinctly "female" or "male." The term basically marks existing biological variation among bodies; that is, bodies are not *essentially* intersex—we just *call* them intersex.

The concepts of "transgender" and "intersex" are easy to confuse, but these terms refer to very different identities. To review, transgender people experience a social process of gender change, while intersex people have biological characteristics that do not fit with the dominant sex/gender system. One term refers to social gender (transgender) and one term refers to biological sex

(intersex).

The Social Construction of Sexualities

Sexuality, sometimes called sexual orientation, is the pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction, feelings, and behaviors to others in relation to one's own gender identity. First, let's look at how social constructions affect our ideas about sexuality.

What does it mean to be "heterosexual" in contemporary U.S. society? As historian of human sexuality Jonathon Ned Katz shows in his book *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (1999), the word "heterosexual" was originally coined by Dr. James Kiernan in 1892, but its meaning and usage differed drastically from contemporary understandings of the term.

Kiernan thought of "hetero-sexuals" as not defined by their attraction to the opposite sex but by their "inclinations to both sexes." Furthermore, Kiernan thought of the heterosexual as those who were attracted to both sexes and engaged in sex for pleasure, not for reproduction. Katz further points out that this definition of the heterosexual lasted within middle-class cultures in the United States until the 1920s, then went through various radical reformulations up to the current usage (Katz, 1999).

Looking at this historical example makes visible the process of the social construction of heterosexuality. First of all, the example shows how social construction occurs within institutions—in this case, a medical doctor created a new category to describe a particular type of sexuality based on existing medical knowledge at the time. "Hetero-sexuality" was initially a medical term that defined a deviant type of sexuality. Second, by seeing how Kiernan—and middle-class culture, more broadly—defined "hetero-sexuality" in the 19th century, it is possible to see how drastically the meanings of the concept have changed over time.

Typically, in the United States, in contemporary usage, "heterosexuality" is thought to mean "normal" or "good"—it is usually the invisible term defined by what is thought to be its opposite, "homosexuality." However, in its initial usage, "hetero-sexuality" was thought to counter the norm of reproductive sexuality and be, therefore, deviant. The norm of reproductive sexuality (having sex to have children) in the 19th century defined what types of sexuality were regarded as "normal" or "deviant."

To be a "heterosexual" in middle-class culture in the United States in the early 1900s was not something desirable to be. The very definition of "hetero-sexual" as deviant, because it violated "proper" reproductive sexuality. Like all social constructions, the meaning of "hetero-sexuality" has changed over time and will continue to change.

Heterosexuality is no more and no less natural than homosexuality or bisexuality. People—particularly sexologists and medical doctors—define heterosexuality and its boundaries. This definition of the parameters of heterosexuality is an expression of power that decides what types of sexuality are considered "normal" and which types of sexuality are considered "deviant." Cultural norms define what is considered "natural."

Heterosexuality is deemed "compulsory," meaning that in our culture, all people are assumed to be heterosexual, and society is full of both formal and informal enforcements that encourage heterosexuality and penalize sexual variation (Rich, 1984). While we now know that there is not one binary contrast to heterosexuality, what range of sexualities exist? Just like gender, sexuality is neither binary nor fixed. There are straight people and gay people, but people are also bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, queer, and heteroflexible, to name a few additional sexual identities. In general, the idea of sexuality being seen on a continuum or other graduated model is now favored rather than the existence of a binary system.

The concept of attraction, with affection and romance rather than sex as an emphasis, has also emerged. Identities such as biromantic, heteroromantic, panromantic, and related terms are used by people to describe themselves. Sexual and romantic attraction, relations, relationships, and identity can shift over a person's lifetime. As there are more than two genders, there are more than two kinds of people to be attracted to, and individuals can be attracted to and can relate sexually to multiple people of different genders at the same time or over a span of time.

Sexuality as Privilege and Oppression in Family Life

Compulsory heterosexuality plays an important role in reproducing inequality in the lives of sexual minorities in many aspects of their own and their families' lives. For example, up until a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2017, same-sex spouses were not allowed to be listed on their child's birth certificate in many states (*Paven v. Smith*, 2017). As of 2022, each state is still able to make its own laws about LGBTQIA+ discrimination in foster care, second-parent adoption, and parental presumption in same-sex relationships. Many states continue to explicitly allow discrimination within the foster care system and adoption placement or have no laws to prevent discrimination. Examples include:

- Not requiring training for foster parents regarding LGBTQ+ youth
- Not permitting second-parent adoptions for same-sex couples, regardless of whether their relationship is legally recognized
- Laws permitting discrimination based on sexuality in adoption or foster placement

In addition, gay men and lesbians have lost custody battles over children due to **homophobia**—fear, hatred, or prejudice toward gay people (Pershing, 1994). Media depictions of gay men and lesbians are few and often negatively stereotyped, but figure 3.4 illustrates the expressive joy of two people in love.



Figure 3.4. Same-sex couples may demonstrate gender and sexuality expressions that break out of the traditional binary expressions. "This is Us!" by Sharon McCutcheon. License: Unsplash License.

Heteronormativity structures the everyday ways in which heterosexuality is privileged and normalized. For instance, sociologist Karen Martin studied what parents say to their children about sexuality and reproduction and found that with children as young as three and five years old, parents routinely assumed their children were heterosexual, told them they would get (heterosexually) married and interpreted cross-gender interactions between children as "signs" of heterosexuality (Martin, 2009). This kind of socialization is an additional element of normative sexuality—the idea of compulsory monogamy, where exclusive romantic and sexual relationships and marriage are expected and valued over other kinds of relationships (Willey, 2016). Heteronormativity surrounds us at a very young age, teaching us that there are only two genders and that we should desire and partner with one person of the opposite gender whom we will marry.

Relationship Structures Continue to Be Created

Symbolic interaction theory, described in Chapter 2, reminds us that society can change more quickly than our language does. We use words to symbolize actions and relationships, but we are constantly in the state of catching up. At the same time, the words that we choose as symbols for relationships contribute to the socially constructed world that we inhabit.

For example, there are people who are very close lifelong partners who may not have a romantic, sexual, or familial relationship determined by blood or legal ties. Queerplatonic relationships, which originated from the asexual and aromantic parts of the LGBTQIA+ community, are described as "nonromantic significant-other relationships of 'partner status'" (Chasin, 2015). It is a nonromantic and nonsexual relationship, but it is more intimate than friendship. The term "platonic life partnership" (PLP) is credited to April Lee, who created a TikTok video and blog posts on the subject that went viral in 2021 and 2022. With roots as far back as the 18th century, when women developed live-in friendships called "Boston marriages," the PLP does not limit partners from pursuing romantic or sexual relationships with other people. It merely makes the platonic partner the central relationship (Klein, 2022). This is what Lee has to say in her April 2022 blog post:

> When we were discussing making this commitment to each other, we found ourselves coming back to the idea of conditional versus unconditional love. Because the foundation of our partnership is our ability to help one another work on ourselves, we consider our love conditional. The rule is: "I'll keep loving you as long as you keep loving yourself." And we've given each other permission to leave if either of us has given up on ourselves or is no longer serving a

> purpose in the other's life, apart from providing comfortable company.
>
> Renee moved in a few months ago, so I guess you could say that we are currently in our honeymoon phase. That said, I've been waiting for 12 years for that to end. So far, I just keep finding more things to love about her—and to love about myself when I'm with her.
>
> This experience has made me believe that the majority of people, myself included, have been navigating interpersonal relationships using the same outdated roadmap. We've romanticized the notion that one person could be our everything: our roommate, our financial and emotional support, our co-parenting partner, our best friend—and on top of all of this, they have to also be our lifelong lover. It just doesn't seem realistic.
>
> I'll never glamorize a platonic life partnership—they take just as much commitment and communication as any other partnership...
>
> ...But it's a relief to not have to worry about keeping a romantic connection alive while discussing the logistics of our shared life....It's based on one very common and flawed assumption: that romantic love is the best kind of love that exists. While I'm a romantic myself, I can't honestly say that this has been my experience (Lee, 2022).

"Queer" is a term that has been used in a derogatory way to describe people who did not fit on the "normal" side of the gender or sexuality binary. However, being "queer" has been increasingly embraced by many members of the LGBTQ+ to describe themselves. The meaning varies based on the person who is using it, and as with all labels, it is important to pay attention to how any individual describes themselves. Being "queer" can be used to signal the rejection of binary systems. Other times, it is used as an umbrella term by people who, in any number of ways, do not see themselves as fitting into some kind of normative gender or sexuality group. This multiplicity suggests that the culturally dominant binary model fails to accurately describe the wide variety of lived experiences.

As society becomes increasingly accepting and knowledgeable about the variety of ways that healthy relationships can be formed, it is likely that new language will continue to be created to reflect a fuller range of relationship structures.

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3.4: Love and Union Formation

Nyssa Cronin and Elizabeth B. Pearce

> "Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."
> —Lao Tzu, philosopher

Relationships represent the excitement, passion, security, and connection we experience; they also represent the sadness, heartbreak, insecurities, violence, and loneliness we find at times.

Close relationships, such as those with a confidant or spouse, are highly associated with health and recovery from disease. In studies of various forms of cancer, including breast cancer, having one or more confidants decreased the likelihood and frequency of relapse (Maunsell et al., 1995). As a social species, intimate relationships—those that are characterized by mutual trust, caring, and acceptance and often extend to a romantic or sexual relationship—are a fundamental aspect of our lives (figure 3.5).



Figure 3.5. People show love and affection through a variety of activities and experiences. "Must be love" by dr. zaro. License: CC BY-NC 2.0, "Couple" by Gaulsstin. License: CC BY-NC 2.0, Photo by Zackary Drucker / The Gender Spectrum Collection. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Theories of Love

Love is a multidimensional concept, and psychologists and sociologists have defined it in a variety of ways over the years. One theory identifies six core components of love that are contained in each of our relationships (Lee, 1973). They are:

- Eros: the love of sensuality (taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell)
- Storgé: the love of your best friend
- Pragma: the love of details and qualities in the other person
- Agapé: the love that is selfless, other-focused, and seeks to serve others rather than receive from others (in Christian theology, it's the love of God for mankind)
- Ludis: an immature love that is more of a tease than a legitimate loving relationship
- Mania: an insecure love that is a mixture of conflict and artificially romantic eros expressions



Figure 3.6. This expression of love is one that appears publicly, but has particular personal meaning to the creator and receiver. “Love” by Hc_07. License: CC BY-NC 2.0.

In modern-day applications of love, various components make up the ingredients of love: commitment, passion, friendship, trust, loyalty, affection, intimacy, acceptance, caring, concern, care, selflessness, infatuation, and romance. In addition, unconditional love is sincere love that does not vary regardless of the actions of the person who is loved, often related to parenting or kinship relationships. Feelings of love are expressed outwardly and internally, as shown in figure 3.6.

The love types and patterns listed below are taken from many sources but fit neatly into several theoretical paradigms:

- Romance: a love that is based on continual courtship and physical intimacy
- Infatuation: a temporary state of love where the other person is overly idolized and seen in narrow and extremely positive terms
- Commitment: a love that is loyal and devoted
- Altruism: a selfless type of love that serves others while not serving the one who is altruistic
- Passion: sexual or passionate love focused on the intense pleasures of the senses (taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell)
- Friendship: a love that includes intimacy and trust among close friends
- Realistic love: feelings you have when your list of ideal personal traits in a potential mate is met in the other person
- Obsession: an unhealthy love type where conflict and dramatic extremes in the relationship are both the goal and the theme of the love

Influences on Union Formations

The factors related to the selection of the people that we are emotionally and/or physically intimate with are complex and nuanced. The spirit of this textbook is to aspire to discuss this topic in a way that recognizes the diversity of family formations in the United States. Here we will do our best to identify some of the shared factors that affect human beings who choose a mate for a long-term relationship.

In order to organize our own thinking, we name and label things to better understand the world around us. As our society changes and expands, descriptions and labels come more slowly, creating cultural lag and causing disconnection. For example, marriage was once defined between only a man and a woman. It is now recognized legally that this is a limiting description that is not representative of our nation’s unions. In addition, couples have formed via common-law marriage and/or cohabitation throughout our country’s history. We will use the terms **union formations** to include all intimate relationships, including marriage. When specific research has focused only on married relationships rather than the broader spectrum, we will use the term “marriage.” Within our text, we acknowledge and celebrate all marriages, unions, partnerships, and relationships that may have mixed legal, religious, or community acceptance. Expressions of affection do not need to be labeled as friendship, love, or marriage; they may be shown in multiple places and ways, as shown by the group of people lounging and hugging each other in figure 3.7.

We will explore the ways that kinship groups and society influence our selection of a primary mate or mates. In addition, we will

review the social exchange theory.



Figure 3.7. Love, comfort, and affection can be shared among two or more people. “Fall Asleep” by LordKhan. License: CC BY 2.0.

Family Experiences, Values, and Expectations

How we choose the people we connect with is influenced by our family experiences, values, and expectations. It is common for adults to communicate and model these with their young children. For example, a parent makes a lighthearted comment about their three-year-old having a boyfriend or girlfriend. And in another comment about marriage, the parent assumes that that child will marry and that it will be to a person of the opposite gender in a binary system. Within the rules and structure of our family of origin, children navigate crucial social experiences that will affect mate selection and relationship dynamics. Young children are most influenced by the world that is both tangible and current. Socialization theory suggests that many of our ideas about gender-based behaviors are formed for life during our early childhood years. Our family of origin impacts how we orient ourselves to particular family themes, identity images, and myths that further identify who is an appropriate intimate partner for us (Anderson & Sabatelli, 2011).

Assortative Mating

When you consider your current mate or any intimate partners that you seek, are they more like you or quite different from you? The idea of **assortative mating**, simply put, is that human beings tend to choose intimate mates who are more like themselves than if mates were assigned randomly.

The ways in which we might choose partners assortatively are quite wide and varied but can be divided very loosely into two categories: the physical and the social. Height and appearance both fit into the physical category; in this text, we will focus more on the social categories, which include culture, ethnicity, religion, education, and socioeconomic status (Schwartz, 2013). In particular, education level has become an increasingly assortative factor within union formations in the United States. Between the 1940s and the 1980s, education increased as an assortative factor until it leveled off for those with higher education degrees. It continues to increase for those without a high school degree, however (Eika et al., 2017). While the patterns in assortative and disassortative relationships have been studied, it is challenging to determine the underlying reasons for this behavior.

Because income level is increasingly associated with higher education, this pattern interacts with the trends in socioeconomic status in the United States and may contribute to the cycle of poverty. It is important to note that this change affects the current generations in ways that we don’t yet completely understand. Millennials and Gen Z are coping with the increased importance of education to income and status at the same time that college costs and student debt have increased dramatically. How this affects union formation and other family patterns remains to be seen. Based on what is known about couples wanting to be financially stable before marrying, it is likely that the trend of marrying less and marrying later will continue.

Economics and Social Movements

Economics and social change affect personal choices about unions, but they also influence the way the role of mate, partner, or spouse is defined. In the early days of this country, and indeed before the formation of the United States, both Indigenous families and Euro-American settlers relied on their kinship and family groupings for survival. Indigenous families lived in tribes that shared spiritual beliefs and resources. Extended kin networks were, and still are, critical to the stability of the community (Deer et al., 2008). Euro-American families were large, with an emphasis on mate selection that would ensure not only survival but also relative financial stability. Fertility was valued because children were seen as assets in the shared family work. Love as a rationale for marriage was disdained; feelings might change, and a marriage built on instability could threaten survival (Coontz, 2000).



Figure 3.8. Industrialization and other economic changes influence union formations and patterns. Photograph by Patrick Hendry. License: Unsplash License.

As the country industrialized, as shown in figure 3.8, roles became more gender-specific: men tended to work in the factories, and women more likely managed the home and children. As you saw in Chapter 1, this is known as the development of separate spheres, an idea that has persisted, albeit in a weakened state, into the 21st century (Lewis, 2019). A growing economy and more routinized family patterns contributed to stability and a decreased focus on survival. It was still important to consider economics in a partnership, but romance, sexual companionship, and love also became expectations of intimate and marriage relationships. Family size decreased dramatically as both child mortality decreased and the White middle class evolved.

However, this progress was enabled by the less privileged. Children and women in minoritized groups continued to contribute to the family income. Labor laws protected most White children. For example, social programs such as the Social Security Act of 1935 excluded domestic and agricultural workers, who were primarily immigrants and people of color. It is important to note that the idealized version of a sparkling house, home-cooked meals, and wife and mother who volunteered at her child's school was maintained via the assistance of other low-paid workers in the home, usually members of minoritized groups. In families that were not protected and privileged by government programs, survival was and is still paramount.

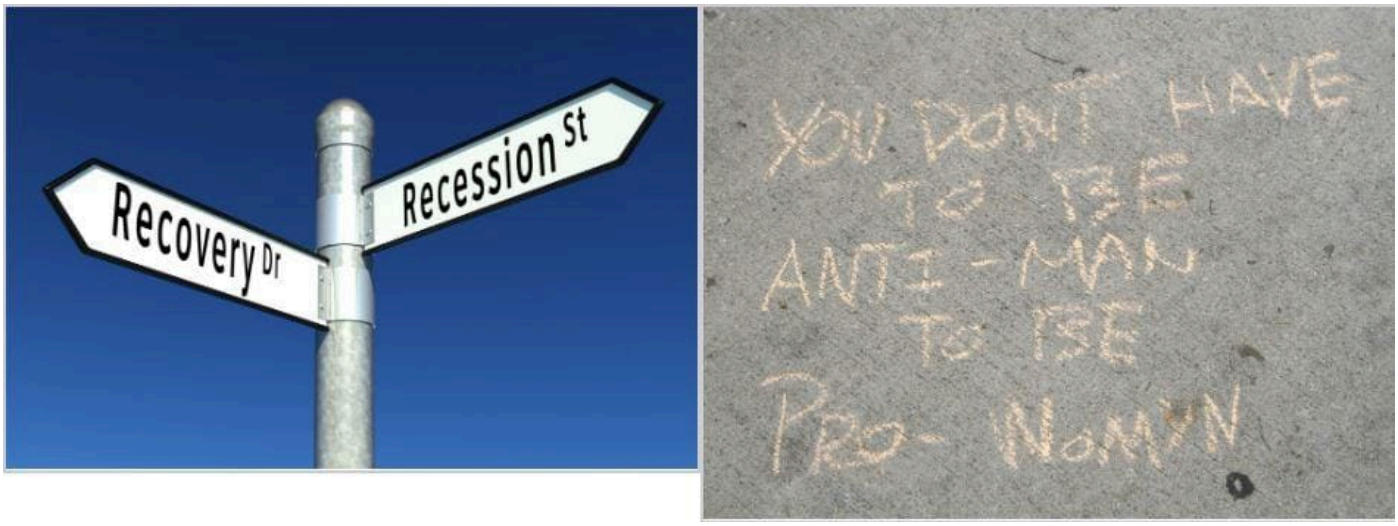


Figure 3.9. Economic changes, along with social movements, have a surprising effect on relationships, union formations, and breakups. "3D Recession Recovery" by ccPixs.com. License: CC BY 2.0. "Take Back the Night 2010" by Marcus Johnstone. License: CC BY-NC 2.0.

The economy in the United States has steadily improved over centuries, but between the 1970s and the present, the country has experienced increasing numbers of shorter periods of both stability and recession. Social movements and technological changes in the same time frame have contributed to a structural and social broadening of the definition of the role of a partner. Figure 3.9 illustrates economic and social changes that influence union formations. The feminist, civil rights, and LGBTQ+ movements have all influenced the ways in which individuals define themselves and, therefore, how we select mates. Interracial and same-sex couplings had existed long before they were openly discussed and eventually legalized. However, it is clear that legal and social acceptance has increased the visibility and likely the number of these relationships as well. The public changes in acceptance of interracial or same-sex relationships are important to note when it comes to the earlier discussion of assortative matings.

Technological advances such as the automobile, household appliances, and the computer all influence relationships. The car makes it more possible for people to meet up and have privacy, and household appliances increase the available time for other parts of life, including partner, friend, and family relationships. Computers, the internet, and phones all facilitate communication and connection in a variety of ways.

Changing Expectations

The United States is an individualistic country, and at the same time that we have seen increased social movements, we have also seen an increase in individualism that must affect our most intimate relationships. While we continue to see marriage as an economic partnership, as well as a source of romance, sex, and companionship, there is now an additional expectation—the importance of self-fulfillment and personal happiness. This adds even more pressure to the mating partnership and may contribute to the decrease in stability and length of marriages (Finkel et al., 2014).

The **social exchange theory,** as described in Chapter 2, is also applicable here. A person might be attracted to someone based on their first impressions—for instance, "They're cute and have a sense of humor that matches mine." After observing them longer, someone might say, "But they also avoid doing their work in class group projects." The social exchange theory says that we evaluate relationships based on looking at the person's advantages and disadvantages to decide if we would want to enter a relationship with them. And what do we have to offer in exchange (our own goods and costs)? This theory emphasizes the implicit agreements that couples exchange when they enter a relationship.

We have been socialized to think of the married White middle-class nuclear family living the "American Dream" as the ideal representation of family within the United States, represented by figure 3.10. This socially constructed ideal has been based on heterosexual norms. This is something that should not be quickly disregarded, as it has shaped and influenced people's thinking, whether or not they personally believe in these ideals.



Figure 3.10. Today's couples use both traditional symbols and postmodern choices in their weddings. Photograph by Євгенія Височина. License: Unsplash License.

U.S. families are as diverse as the people who live here. It is important to understand that, as a nation, we have many similarities in regards to our experiences, values, and expectations. We also have differences. We describe here some of the institutional forces and theoretical ideas about how individuals enter into amorous relationships, but we also acknowledge that each relationship is unique, complex, and nuanced in ways that are indescribable in writing.

Comprehension Self Check

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3.5: A Word about Marriage

In the United States, marriage is often viewed as a symbolic representation of love and a significant step into adulthood. A single lifelong marriage is considered a success. But these are social constructions. Here, we will discuss the socially constructed ideals of marriage, as well as acknowledge that marriage is just one possibility within all romantic and love relationships. Admittedly, marriage holds a high status in the United States. And we will ask you, the reader, to think about the role of marriage in society.

Marriage as a Social Construction

What image comes to mind when you think about marriage? Perhaps you immediately see a couple—a young man and a young woman—in wedding garb, with the man in formal black clothing and the woman in a white dress, figure 3.11. Weddings are symbolic of the joining of a couple and the families involved. Perhaps you visualized something else—another stage of marriage or another kind of couple or family. The meaning of and ideals about marriage have changed over time and differ among kinship groups and cultures.



Figure 3.11. Weddings signal the start of a marriage and have symbolic importance in the United States, although both weddings and marriages have changed in meaning over time. Photo by Casi Yost. License: CC BY 4.0.

The most powerful social constructions of marriage in the United States have been driven by the economy and social change. Briefly summarized, these are the ways that marriage has been viewed by society over time:

- Marriage as an institution was the most common among Euro-American settlers from the time of arrival in what became the United States until the mid-20th century. In **institutionalized marriage**, roles were clearly defined between the man and the woman in the pursuit of economic and familial stability. Producing children was highly valued, as they contributed to the family's economic stability.
- **Companionate marriage** emerged as the economy in the United States improved and one spouse (usually the man) worked away from the home. "Separate spheres," the idea that men and women worked in different worlds (home and the workplace), emerged. While roles were still well defined, the importance of companionship, love, affection, and sex were all added to the expectations of a marital relationship to create the idea of the companionate marriage.
- **Individualized marriage** evolved with the country's continued economic growth and the increase in women's equality and the expansion of gender roles for men, women, and nonbinary people. This led to more flexible and fluid roles in marriages and in parenting. In addition, in individualistic marriages, it is expected that each spouse works toward their own self-actualization, as well as supporting their spouse's self-actualization. Parenting and work within marriage were more likely to be shared. Both partners are expected to be more expressive and communicative. The role of support and encouragement in helping your spouse to become their best self is added to the growing list of expectations for marriage (Cherlin, 2004).

Socially constructed ideals have taken on additional representation with the increasing usage of social media and the emergence of influencers (entrepreneurs who support themselves via their images, text, and videos on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok). Rather than acknowledging the challenges and imperfections within relationships, social media content by influencers is designed to reinforce idealized concepts and sell products. This contributes to the unrealistic constructions of married life (Perel, 2019).

Who Is Left Out?

Who is left out of this socially constructed idea? Let's talk about other forms of union formation that may not fit the idealized marriage construction. As discussed earlier, our social identities, especially those that are related to gender and sexuality, are integral to the partnerships we form.

In the United States, as well as other countries, two individuals of the same sex may be legally married, but all over the world, same-sex couples have been creating households and families for centuries, long before any legal recognition. Same-sex marriages are documented, for instance, in the history of Native American groups from the Great Plains. On the Plains, men who preferred to dress and take on the roles of women were allowed to marry other men. It was assumed that if one partner gathered plant food and prepared food, the other partner should have a complementary role, like hunting. Androgynous individuals, males who preferred female roles or dress, and females who took on male roles were not condemned but rather regarded as "two-spirit," a label that had positive connotations.

Two-spirit people were considered to embody a third gender, combining elements of both male and female. The key to the two-spirit gender identity was behavior: what individuals did in their communities (Roscoe, 2005). If a person who was born biologically male felt their identity and chosen lifestyle best matched the social role recognized as female, they could move into a third-gender two-spirit category. Today, Native American groups set their own laws regarding same-sex marriage. Many recognize two-spirit individuals and accept the marriage of a two-spirit person to a person of the same biological sex. Although some nations still do not permit same-sex marriage between tribal members, one of the largest tribal nations, the Cherokee Nation, legalized same-sex marriages in 2016.

Although same-sex marriage was legalized in the United States in 2015, there is still **stigma**, which is a negative or discriminatory attitude based on a social characteristic or behavior, and controversy attached to same-sex couples who wish to marry (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015). Among same-sex couples, there is variance in how much of the socially constructed ideals of weddings and marriage they choose to embrace. Some choose to have weddings, symbols, and marriages that fit these ideals, and others reject these symbols while using the legal benefits of marriage.

Polygamy refers to any marriage in which there are multiple partners. It is related to **polyamory**, relationships in which a person has intimate relationships with more than one person at a time (and is transparent with partners about this). There are two kinds of polygamy: polygyny and polyandry. Polygyny refers to marriages in which there is one husband and multiple wives. In some societies that practice polygyny, the preference is for sororal polygyny or the marriage of one man to several sisters. In such cases, it is sometimes believed that sisters will get along better as co-wives. Polyandry describes marriages with one wife and multiple husbands. As with polygyny, fraternal polyandry is common and involves the marriage of a woman to a group of brothers.

Polygamy has not been legalized in the United States, nor is there significant discussion about this right. Polygamous families face stigma and discrimination and do not fit into the socially constructed ideal of marriage.

Remember that marriage is one way of building a family or kinship group. As you continue to read this text, we encourage you to think critically about what marriage means to your own family and to society and what role it should play.

Comprehension Self Check

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3.6: Societal and Personal Influences on Union Formations

As discussed in Chapter 1, these authors believe that each person is in control of their own social and family identities. Social institutions, however, also define "family" via rights, responsibilities, benefits, and taxes. While the federal government leaps to mind as the arbiter of family definitions for taxation and benefits purposes, state and local governments are the primary legislators of family law and mediators of familial relationships. This was an intentional decision made during the formation of the United States of America: that states and local municipalities be the governors of matters related to the family. It is only when there is enough disruption among the states that matters of the family rise to the national decision-making level. An example is that many different laws related to same-sex marriage created inequities for families within states and disruption for families who moved from state to state. The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision that the right to marry is fundamental and must be available to all couples created consistency in marriage law (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015).

In addition to government entities, institutions such as employers, schools, and insurance companies all have the authority to define family within certain parameters and to limit benefits such as sick leave, insurance coverage, and pension benefits to said family members. We know that these institutions impact the resources and benefits that families receive based on their structure and legal ties to one another. How do these varied definitions, policies, and practices affect partner and family formation and dissolutions? Whom we connect with, love, parent, marry, and divorce affects our access to resources in ways that are inequitable.

The complexity of factors in choosing a partner(s) or in forming a family makes it challenging to study family formation. Researchers and students must be willing to hold multiple ideas in mind as they analyze this topic. As you read this textbook, we will explore how institutional policies and practices may play a role in those decisions. Federal Student Aid and student loans, Medicaid and Medicare, Social Security and income taxes, immigration law, military housing policies, and health care insurance all rely on definitions of partner and family structures in order to assign taxes, rights, privileges, and benefits. Look for these examples in upcoming chapters about housing, health care, education, and more.

Official Definitions and Societal Stigma

Definitions and categories are used to assign rights, privileges, and benefits to individuals and families. Government policies grounded in these definitions are intertwined with status and stigma. For example, although same-sex and interracial marriages are now legal across the country, they still have levels of stigma associated with them, depending on location. Cohabitation, even among White heterosexual couples, has less status than marriage. Status and stigma can affect people socially and emotionally as well as economically.

Relationship Health and Relationship Challenges

While this course and text are primarily focused on how society, institutions, and kinship groups interact, we will focus here on the health of intimate relationships and what factors, both internal and external, predict the longevity of the relationship.

In Focus: What Makes Relationships Hard?

First, watch the Ted Talk "Relationships Are Hard, but Why?" by therapist Stan Tatkin in figure 3.12.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 3.12. Relationships Are Hard, But Why? [YouTube Video]. Therapist Stan Tatkin talks about how our brains contribute to falling in love and then about how our communication styles can contribute to feelings of being safe or threatened within relationships. Transcript. "Relationships Are Hard, But Why?" License: Standard YouTube License.

As you watch, consider:

- What was new to you in this video?
- What are the "mistakes" that the primitive brain contributes to?
- What does he mean by "Human communication, even on a good day, is terrible"?
- What is the "fun part" described by Stan Tatkin?
- In what ways can you apply these ideas to your own life or to what you have observed?

The first half of 2020 saw a confluence of worldwide events: the coronavirus and related pandemic, massive job loss, school closures, and an economic downturn along with the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. These events have affected families in many ways; let's look at two examples of how these trends and movements have uncovered challenges within intimate relationships.

An August 2020 letter to advice columnist Carolyn Hax started out this way:

> My husband and I disagree about COVID-19 precautions and have reached the point where we're constantly fighting about it. I am more conservative and trying to have contact with only a few families I know are taking similar precautions. He's exposing himself and his 8-year-old son, my stepson, to a lot more people, including one family that I believe does not take COVID seriously. One child in this family had cold symptoms, and they refused to have him tested and continued to expose him to other kids.
>
> At first my husband lied to me about seeing this family. After I found out, he said he won't lie anymore but is going to do what he wants (Hax, 2020).

As the writer continues and Hax responds, they both acknowledge that the extreme pandemic experience has exposed the husband's willingness to lie to his partner and disregard her feelings and needs. Hax emphasizes that this is not situation-specific but actually uncovers a challenge in the relationship that must be addressed separately from the specific circumstance. She advises the letter writer that she has several options: going to couples counseling to see if the husband is willing to change this behavior, leaving the marriage, or choosing to stay, knowing that she is not able to fully trust him.



Figure 3.13. Rachel Lindsay and Becca Kufrin have had lively dialogues about relationships and racism. Photograph © Bachelor Happy Hour. License: Fair Use.

A very public example of a relationship challenge comes to us from a popular television franchise: *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. Two former *Bachelorette* leads, Rachel Lindsay (figure 3.13, left) and Becca Kufrin (figure 3.13, right), hosted a

podcast together, *Bachelor Happy Hour*. Lindsay had met her husband on her season of the show, and Kufrin had met her then-fiancé on hers. Both women make some portion of their livelihood as "influencers," as do each of their male partners.

As the Black Lives Matter movement gained more notice and additional White allies emerged, Kufrin identified herself publicly as someone who wanted to become a more knowledgeable and active person in the racial justice movement. Simultaneously, her fiancé, Garrett Yrigoyen, posted Instagram images that presented his support of the opposing Blue Lives Matter movement. Kufrin discussed both her own personal development and the challenges she faced in her relationship on the podcast. Kufrin and Yrigoyen have since ended their engagement and relationship. In 2021, Lindsay left the podcast for reasons related to the ways in which the franchise treated contestants of color and issues of race on the show. As of 2024, she and her husband are in the process of divorcing.

Families were and continue to be under great pressure from the pandemic and economic stress. People of color also experience additional stress related to the public exposure of the disproportionate violence against Black people. In many cases, kinship groups are spending more time together, including those in intimate relationships. Values and belief system differences that may have been purposely hidden or that were just implicitly undiscussable may be uncovered and affect relationships permanently.

If you'd like to know more about healthy relationships and learn about which relationships are more likely to last, the Gottman Institute is a psychological research institute that studies couple interactions and nuances.

In "The Secret to a Successful Relationship," in figure 3.14, host Julian Huguet describes the Gottmans' work and predictors of success in the relationships that they have studied, primarily in heterosexual married couples.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=855#oembed-2

Figure 3.14 The Secret to a Successful Relationship [YouTube Video]. This short video describes the Gottman Institute's work. Transcript. "The Secret To A Successful Relationship" © DNews. License: Standard YouTube License.

While the Gottman Institute is known for its scientific research, as with many studies in social science, the majority of participating couples are White and heterosexual. The Gottmans participated with Dr. Robert Levenson in a 12-year study of 21 gay and 21 lesbian couples. In an effort to study underrepresented populations as well as partnerships outside of marriage, they have acknowledged this weakness and are reaching out to underrepresented people to tell their own relationship stories via a submission form on their website. You can participate here.

Comprehension Self Check

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Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015)

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3.7: Union Dissolution and Divorce

The U.S. divorce rate has risen since the early 1900s, with several peaks and valleys, and it is now one of the highest in the industrial world. It rose sharply during the Great Depression and World War II, probably because of the economic distress of the former and the family disruption caused by the latter, and fell sharply after the war as the economy thrived and marriage and family were proclaimed as patriotic ideals. It dropped a bit more during the 1950s before rising sharply in the 1970s (Cherlin, 2009). The divorce rate has declined steadily since 1980, as shown in figure 3.15.

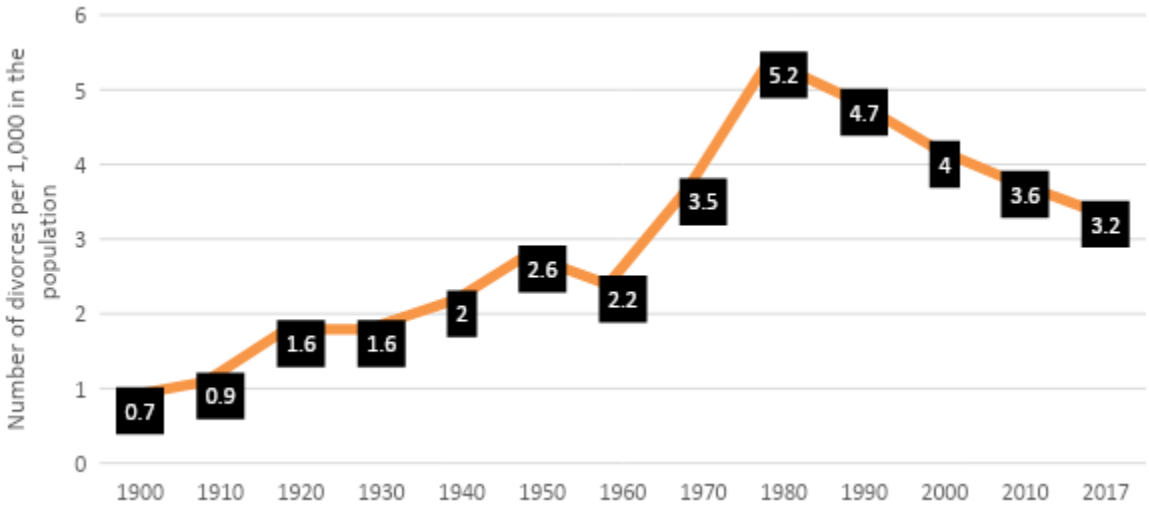


Figure 3.15. This graph shows the number of divorces per 1,000 in the population from 1900 to 2017. Data from Infoplease and National Center for Health Statistics.

Reasons for Divorce

We cannot be certain about why the divorce rate rose so much during the 1960s and 1970s, but we can rule out two oft-cited causes. First, there is little reason to believe that marriages became any less happy during this period. We do not have good data to compare marriages then and now, but the best guess is that marital satisfaction did not decline after the 1950s ended. What did change was that people after the 1950s became more willing to seek divorces in marriages that were already unhappy.

Sometimes, the contemporary women's movement is blamed for the increase in the divorce rate by making women think marriage is an oppressive institution. The women's movement emerged in the late 1960s and was capturing headlines by the early 1970s. Although the divorce rate obviously rose after that time, it also started rising several years before the women's movement emerged. If the divorce rate began rising before the women's movement started, it is illogical to blame the women's movement. Instead, other structural and cultural forces must have been at work, just as they were at other times in the last century when the divorce rate rose and fell.

Why, then, did divorce increase during the 1960s and 1970s? Recall our discussion earlier in Chapter 3 about the changing nature of marriage expectations. As individuals expect more and more from marriage, it is more likely that some partnerships would not meet the increased expectations of companionship, romance, sex, and monogamy required for the social construction of the companionate marriage. Shifting forward to the 21st century, adding the expectations of role flexibility and personal fulfillment of the individualistic marriage, you can see that it may be more difficult for any one person or partnership to meet these ideals. The greater societal emphasis on personal fulfillment has likely contributed to people ending unhappy marriages.

The increasing economic independence of women is another likely contributing factor. As women entered the labor force in the 1960s and 1970s, they became more economically independent of their spouses. When women in unhappy marriages become more economically independent, they are more able to afford to get divorced than when they have to rely entirely on their spouses' earnings for survival (Hiedemann, Suhomlinova, & O'Rand, 1998).

When both spouses work outside the home, moreover, it is more difficult to juggle the many demands of family life, especially

childcare, and family life can be more stressful. Such stress can reduce marital happiness and make divorce more likely. Spouses have less time for each other when both are working outside the home, making it more difficult to deal with problems they may be having.

It is also true that disapproval of divorce has declined since the 1950s, even if negative views of it still remain (Cherlin, 2009). Not too long ago, divorce was considered a deviant act, and now, it is considered a normal, if unfortunate, part of life. We no longer say a bad marriage should continue for the sake of the children. But is the growing acceptability of divorce a cause or result of the rising divorce rate? Or is it both? There are bidirectional forces at play with societal views and individual actions.

Divorces also became easier to legally obtain in the 1960s and 1970s. In the past, most states required couples to prove that one or both had committed actions such as mental cruelty, adultery, or other such behaviors in order to get divorced. Today, almost all states have no-fault divorce laws that allow a couple to divorce if they say their marriage has failed due to irreconcilable differences (Kneip & Bauer, 2009).

About 40% to 50% of all new marriages will probably end in divorce, but some marriages are more likely to end than others. Family scholars identify several correlates of divorce (Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006; Wilcox, 2009). They include:

- Age at marriage: Teenagers who get married are much more likely to get divorced than people who marry well into their 20s or beyond
- Social class: People who are poor at the time of their marriage are more likely to get divorced than people who begin their marriages in economic comfort, as the stress of poverty causes stress in marriage.

Effects of Divorce and Single-Parent Households

Much research exists on the effects of divorce on spouses and their children, and scholars do not always agree on what these effects are. One thing is clear: Divorce plunges many women into poverty or near-poverty (Gadalla, 2008). Many have been working only part-time or not at all outside the home, and divorce takes away their spouse's economic support. Even women working full-time often have trouble making ends meet because they are more likely to be paid less than men for their work.

It is very difficult to separate the effects of divorce from the effects of poverty, but research indicates that poverty has worse effects on women and children than divorce. One-parent families headed by a woman for any reason are much poorer ($35,400 median annual income in 2016) than those headed by a man ($55,580 median annual income in 2016). Meanwhile, that same year, the median income of married-couple families was much higher ($85,300). More than one-third of single-parent families headed by women are poor.

Although the economic consequences of divorce seem clear, what are the psychological consequences for families? Are they better off if a divorce occurs, worse off, or about the same? The research evidence is very conflicting. Many studies find that divorced spouses are, on average, less happy and have poorer mental health after their divorce, but some studies find that happiness and mental health often improve after divorce (Williams, 2003; Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009). The time period examined is critical: For many, psychological well-being may decline in the immediate aftermath of a divorce but rise over the next few years.

Parents used to stay together "for the sake of the children," thinking that divorce would cause their children more harm than good. Studies of this issue generally find that children in divorced families are, in fact, more likely, on average, to do worse in school, use drugs and alcohol, suffer other behavioral problems, and experience emotional distress and other psychological problems (Sun & Li, 2009; Amato & Cheadle, 2008). It is difficult to determine whether the effects on children stem from the divorce itself, poverty, or the parental conflict that led to the divorce. Notably, children tend to rebound after the first year following the divorce.

The statistics on children and poverty are discouraging (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2009). Nineteen percent of children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold, and 41% of children live in households experiencing twice the poverty threshold (double the poverty line) (Koball & Jiang, 2018). Family structure plays a significant role in child poverty, with 41% of children in poverty residing with a single parent compared to the 13% of children in poverty who live with two parents. Figure 3.16 shows updated poverty rates for children living in poverty based on family structure.

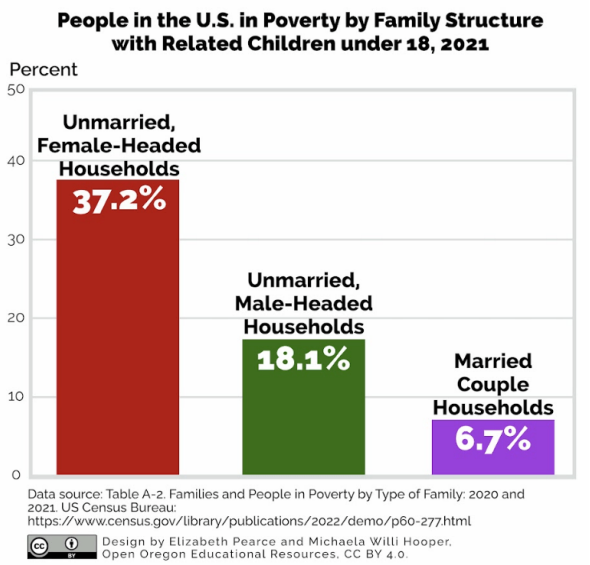


Figure 3.16. This chart shows the dramatic difference in poverty for children living in married households compared to unmarried male-headed households and unmarried female-headed households, where children face the highest poverty levels. Image description. "People in U.S. in Poverty by Family Structure" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources.. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on data from Table A-2. Families and People in Poverty by Type of Family: 2020 and 2021. US Census Bureau: https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/demo/p60-277.html

As with many things, race and ethnicity play an important role: African American, Latine, and Native American children are more than two times as likely as non-Latine White children to live in poverty.

Childhood poverty is higher in the United States than in any other post-industrial democracy, and poor children in the United States fare worse than their counterparts in other postindustrial democracies (Jäntti, 2009). A major reason for this is that the United States lacks the large national programs other postindustrial democracies have for both preventing poverty and helping children and adults already living in poverty. These programs include housing allowances, free or subsidized daycare and preschool programs, and adequate healthcare (Waldfogel, 2009).

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=857#h5p-18

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3.8: Looking Ahead- Kinship and Health

Nyssa Cronin and Elizabeth B. Pearce

We are a social species. Familial roles can be expanded beyond the perimeters of legal definitions and regarded in a much broader sense that can include friendships, sexual relationships, caregiving, social support, partnering, and more. The people we interact with on a daily basis have been influenced by many factors, including where we live, our socioeconomic status, and the attachments that we formed in early childhood. This complicated network of influencing factors within our relationships contributes to societal disparities and inequities, a factor that we have strived to make more visible through this text.

Kinship, partnerships, and familial relationships contribute to health benefits, as described in the first section of this chapter. As shown in figure 3.17, these interactions and connections also contribute to the joy and empathy of shared experience.



Figure 3.17. Families, partnerships, and kinship groups come together to laugh, reminisce, learn, compete, build, and play. Facing adversity together can strengthen ties and build purpose. “Interracial Couple” by mattradickal. License: CC BY-NC 2.0.

We aspire to understand the ways that labels, definitions, and policies weaken kinship formations. Simultaneously, we celebrate and support the love and joy that families can produce, maintain, and grow.

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3.9: Going Deeper

Now that you have started reading about the importance of love and community, this page has some resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- If you would like to read more about the separation of immigrant families from the Global South, there is a deep dive on this Human Rights Watch webpage, and there are links to detailed fact sheets and descriptions of visits to the facilities where parents, babies, toddlers, and children are being held.
- To learn more about platonic life partnerships (PLPs) from April Lee, visit her TikTok page.
- To read more about digital media and relationships, read the article "From Online Dating to Online Divorce: An Overview of Couple and Family Relationships Shaped through Digital Media" (2017).
- If you'd like to listen to Rachel Lindsay and Becca Kufrin, listen to "Race, Diversity, and Bachelor Nation," the June 9, 2020, episode of *Bachelor Happy Hour*. It is also available on most podcast platforms.
- To read about how to qualify for Medicare or Medicaid, review these government websites:
  - Medicare.gov
  - Medicaid.gov

Reflective Questions

1. How are community and connection important to individuals? What theory best helps you understand this idea?
2. How are kinship and family similar and different? What is the role of social structure?
3. How do changes in the social constructions of gender and sexuality affect family and intimate relationships?
4. What are the factors that contribute to union formation? Which ones have influenced you the most personally?
5. In what ways does the government influence partnerships, marriages, and breakups?
6. What are the most likely contributing factors to the increase in divorce from the 1960s forward? What are the disproven factors that are still cited by many?
7. How does societal stigma influence union formations?
8. What are the issues related to equity when it comes to partnerships (including marriage)?

Key Terms

- **Assortative mating:** the tendency to choose intimate mates who are more like oneself.
- **Binary:** a social construct composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites.
- **Chosen families:** nonbiological kinship bonds, whether legally recognized or not, deliberately chosen for the purpose of mutual support and love.
- **Cisgender:** a person who identifies in accordance with their gender assignment.
- **Companionate marriage:** in addition to economic stability, these marriages also have an expectation of love, affection,

friendship, and sexual fidelity and satisfaction.
- **Gender:** a socially constructed expression of a person's sexual identity that influences the status, roles, and norms for their behavior.
- **Hierarchy of needs theories:** a framework articulated by multiple Indigenous groups that emphasizes self-actualization not just of the individual but of the community as the most primary of needs.
- **Homophobia:** fear, hatred, or prejudice toward gay people.
- **Individualized marriage:** responsibilities and roles are more fluid, and the enhancement of individual well-being and psychological growth is added to expectations.
- **Polyamory:** having intimate relationships with more than one person at a time.
- **Sexuality:** the pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction to others in relation to one's own gender identity.
- **Stigma:** a negative or discriminatory attitude based on a social characteristic or behavior.
- **Transgender people:** individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.
- **Union formation:** an intimate relationship in which two or more people commit to some kind of union, including marriage.

Activity: How Do Theories and Your Ideas about Marriage Connect?

Earlier in the chapter, you matched the following statements about marriage with the core theories discussed in this text (figure 3.12, reproduced below):

1. Marriage is a social construction: something that people have agreed is a unit of importance that has changed in meaning and function over time and location.
2. Marriage is a status symbol: Even though people are marrying less, it is still important.
3. Although individuals may not realize it, the way that world events have shaped their birth cohort impacts the timing and likelihood of marriage for them.
4. Marriage is a partnership that individuals form considering the costs and benefits of pairing up with another person.
5. Marriage is another function in which the power of men over women is emphasized in a binary structure.
6. Marriage is impacted by the social structure in our country—the institutions and processes that privilege some and oppress others.
7. When examining an individual's circles of support, marriage can be an important part of the innermost circle.
8. People marry for so many reasons and in so many different ways that it is difficult to say what it means or why people marry.

Discussion questions

1. Do you agree with some of these statements? Which ones and why?
2. If you wrote your own statement about marriage and society, what would it say?
3. Consider the theories below. Which theories are closest to your understanding of marriage, and how do they help you understand how marriage works?

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles
Ecological Systems	Individuals are part of a group of concentric systems that impact their development and growth.
Exchange (aka Social Exchange)	Individuals have different strengths, resources, and weaknesses and enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits and costs.
Feminist (aka Feminism)	Society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; this theory works to understand and to transform inequalities.
Life Course	This theory pays attention to time, including significant social and historical events and life transitions, and how it shapes the trajectories of birth cohorts and the individuals in them.
Postmodernism (aka Modernity)	Choice and individuality are emphasized in the postmodern era. Humans are able to act in the way they choose within society and institutions.
Structural Diversity	This approach examines the close connections between the inner workings of families and the social structures that shape all families, but in different ways.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles
Symbolic Interaction	This theory focuses on the changing nature of symbols and the ways we interact with one another based on those symbols. Humans see themselves through the eyes of others, and this affects the roles they play.

This table shows some of the foundational theories related to the study of families.

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CHAPTER 4: NURTURANCE, PARENTING, AND CAREGIVING

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the importance of caregiving relationships using a family or parenting theory or perspective.
2. Discuss the significance of attachment.
3. Describe the demographic changes that affect parenting, grandparenting, and other caregiving relationships.
4. Explain how public policies can affect family structures and parenting practices.
5. Explain the significance of the U.S. role in the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child.
6. Describe stigmas associated with parenting as well as with being childless or childfree.
7. Explain the difference between family forms and family functions.
8. Analyze parenting and caregiving from an equity perspective.

4.1: Chapter Reading Guide

4.2: Nurturance - Caring for Others

4.3: Family and Parenting Theories and Perspectives

4.4: Changing Demographics

4.5: Public Policy and Parenting

4.6: Family Forms and Functions

4.7: Looking Ahead- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

4.8: Going Deeper

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4.1: Chapter Reading Guide

Now it's time to look more closely at the part of family life involving caregiving, including parenting, being parented, grandparenting, and other close relationships that include taking care of others. You will see some theoretical approaches that will help you understand family behaviors and trends. You'll also look at the way public policy and other social structures influence these very intimate relationships. And you'll learn about how to distinguish family form from family function.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

With gratitude to the Linn-Benton Community College students in the "Contemporary Families in the U.S." classes of spring, summer, and fall 2021, who gave insightful feedback and suggestions to this chapter, and especially to Genna Stern and Shyanti Franco who created chapter content for their final projects. — Elizabeth B. Pearce

Key Terms Preview

- **Attachment theory:** the theory that the capacity to form emotional attachments to others is primarily developed during infancy and early childhood.
- **Birth rate:** the number of live births per 1,000 women in the total population.
- **Caregiving:** the act of providing support or watching over a person.
- **Concerted cultivation:** a parenting style that emphasizes adult-led enrichment programs for children.
- **Dysfunction:** behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or society.
- **Ecological systems theory:** a framework that looks at individuals within their environments.
- **Family form:** the structure of a family, including the members and their relationships to one another.
- **Family function:** the way a family's members behave toward each other and within society.
- **Fecundity rate:** the reproductive rate for people who want to have biological children who are able to get pregnant and give birth.
- **Fertility rate:** the number of people in a specific age range who are able to give birth.
- **Grandfamily:** a family in which grandparents are the primary caregivers to their grandchildren; usually the parents are not present.
- **Mortality rate:** the rate of death for a particular group or in a particular area.
- **Multigenerational families:** more than two generations of a family living together.
- **Natural growth:** a parenting style that emphasizes child-led games and activities, often in multi-age groups from the same family or neighborhood.
- **Nature and nurture:** a discussion about the relationship between biological and environmental factors in a child's development.
- **Parenting styles:** usually refers to Baumrind's four styles of parenting, which include authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved.

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4.2: Nurturance - Caring for Others

Caregiving and being cared for is one of the critical aspects of kinship and family life. All of us have been parented in one form or another. In addition, many provide caregiving and nurturance to children, younger adults, and other adults who need or desire assistance (figure 4.1).

Perhaps the most emphasized caregiving role in the United States is that of "parent," but it is important to realize that this too is a social construction. Some are parents via biological creation, but others become parents via other familial relationships such as grandparenting. There are legally assigned adoptive and foster parents. And there are those who fully meet the caregiver and provider definition of parent but have neither legal nor biological ties to those in their charge.

In this section we will discuss parenting, grandparenting, and other nurturing relationships. We will also examine the horizontal and vertical relationships related to kinship and caregiving.



Figure 4.1. Nurturing relationships occur in many family forms. "Family (3).jpg" by Freelancecynic is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0., "The family" by TukangRoti is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0. And "IMG_7704" by Bengt Nyman is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

A **caregiver** provides nurturance or support to another person in some way, shape, or form. Other than parenting, caregiving also covers areas regarding the care of adults, elders, individuals who are disabled or ill, and people who fall anywhere in the spectrum of not being able to have their full needs met without the assistance of others.

Now that the baseline meaning of a caregiver is defined, let's explore the different, deeper aspects of nurturance and how people may or may not get the proper care that they need. We will examine the ways in which institutional power, influence, and discrimination impact these critical relationships. We will discuss theories related to parenting and other nurturing relationships. And we will continue to note the ways that societal perceptions impact families—the ways that some kinship groups are harmed or limited and others are privileged—in their experience with nurturance, caregiving, and receiving care.

As introduced in Chapter 1, one way to view families is through their private and public functions. In this chapter, the focus is on the public function of families: the caregiving and nurturing of family members, with a focus on children. Other public functions include caring for disabled adults and older family members (Cherlin, 2017).

Another example of this function is older family members caring for grandchildren or helping run households for and with their adult children. The relationships can also be bidirectional when **multigenerational** households share caregiving, financial, and household responsibilities, as pictured in figure 4.2. These kinds of households have consistently been more common in other countries and within some cultures in the United States, such as in Latine communities. They are now becoming more common among the White middle-class demographic that previously embraced the nuclear family. Demographic and societal forces have contributed to these changes.



Figure 4.2. Multigenerational family living situations are more common in the early 21st century than they were in the late 20th century. "Dah-party 03" by Chona Kasinger and Disabled and Here. License: CC BY 4.0.

Comprehension Self Check

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4.3: Family and Parenting Theories and Perspectives

Shyanti Franco and Elizabeth B. Pearce

There are several important and well-accepted theories about how children develop, but in this text we will be focusing on the child within kinship relationships. We will describe the ecological systems theory as well as several theories related to attachment and parenting, visualized in figure 4.3.



Figure 4.3. Parenting theories emphasize the importance of the caregiving relationships that nurture learning and development in children. Adults are expected to protect and care for children in our society. “Individual Protection” by Martin Gommel. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

The Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory was introduced in Chapter 3. Here we will explore it more deeply and use it to illustrate the way various systems interact to influence nurturing by parents and other caregivers. This theory helps us look more deeply at the direct and indirect influences on children’s lives without favoring one family form or family circumstance over another.

The **ecological systems theory** was created in the late 1970s by Urie Bronfenbrenner. He developed this theory to explain how environments affect a child’s or individual’s growth and development. The model in figure 4.4 shows six concentric circles that represent the individual, environments, and interactions:

- **Individual:** the main concept behind an ecological approach, “person in environment,” means that every person lives in an environment that can affect their outcome or circumstance. In helping professions such as human services and social work, professionals work to improve a person’s environment by helping them identify what is working well and what is negatively impacting them within their environments.
- **Microsystem:** the smallest system that focuses on the relationship between a person and their direct environment—typically the places and people that the person sees every day (often parents and school for a child or partner and work/school for an adult).
- **Exosystem:** the people and places that an individual interacts with on a regular basis but not daily (perhaps a place of worship, club, lesson, or social group).
- **Mesosystem:** the space between the microsystems and exosystems that represents how those people and places interact and cooperate.
- **Macrosystem:** the larger values and attitudes of the culture.
- **Chronosystem:** time as a system that affects individuals.

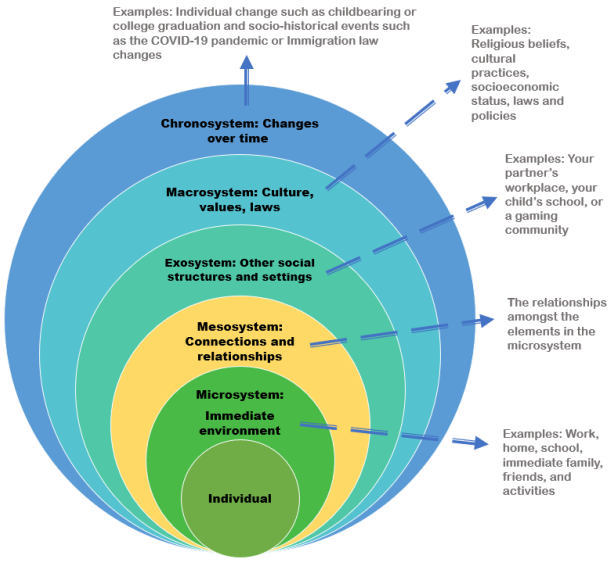


Figure 4.4 This view of individuals emphasizes the ways that environments, time, and relationships impact a person's development. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Visualization by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0.

Attachment Theory

Research demonstrates the importance of connected caregiving to our mate relationships and selection. This is explained largely through attachment theory. **Attachment theory** implies that the capacity to form emotional attachments to others is primarily developed during infancy and early childhood. It is believed that children need to form a healthy attachment with at least one primary caregiver. The psychologists Harry Harlow, John Bowlby, and Mary Ainsworth each developed aspects of our understanding of attachment and the associated behaviors.

Psychosocial development occurs as children form relationships, interact with others, and understand and manage their feelings. In social and emotional development, forming healthy attachments is very important and is the major social milestone of infancy (figure 4.5). Developmental psychologists are interested in how infants reach this milestone. They ask questions such as: How do parent and infant attachment bonds form? How does neglect affect these bonds? What accounts for children's attachment differences?



Figure 4.5. A child comfortably rests in their parent's arms. Photograph on pxhere.com. License: CCO Public Domain.

Attachment is defined as the affectional bond or tie that infants form with their mother (Bowlby, 1969). An infant must form this

bond with a primary caregiver in order to have normal social and emotional development. In addition, Bowlby proposed that this attachment bond is very powerful and continues throughout life. He used the concept of a secure base to define a healthy attachment between parent and child (Bowlby, 1988). A secure base is a parental presence that gives the child a sense of safety as he explores his surroundings. Bowlby (1969) said that two things are needed for a healthy attachment: The caregiver must be responsive to the child's physical, social, and emotional needs, and the caregiver and the child must engage in mutually enjoyable interactions.

While Bowlby believed that attachment was an all-or-nothing process, Mary Ainsworth's research showed otherwise (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Ainsworth identified the existence of "attachment behaviors," which are examples of behaviors demonstrated by insecure children in hopes of establishing or re-establishing an attachment to a presently absent caregiver. As Ainsworth explains, "Since this behavior occurs uniformly in children, it is a compelling argument for the existence of 'innate' or instinctive behaviors in human beings" (Psychologist World, 2019).

Ainsworth developed the Strange Situation procedure to study attachment between mothers and their infants in 1970 (figure 4.6). In the Strange Situation, the mother (or primary caregiver) and the infant (aged 12 to 18 months) are placed in a room together. There are toys in the room, and the caregiver and child spend some time alone in the room. After the child has had time to explore one's surroundings, a stranger enters the room. The primary caregiver then leaves the baby with the stranger. After a few minutes, the caregiver returns to comfort the child.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 4.6. The Strange Situation – Mary Ainsworth [YouTube Video]. You can observe different attachment styles here in this example of the Strange Situation. Transcript. "The Strange Situation: Mary Ainsworth." License: Standard YouTube License.

Based on how the children responded to the separation and reunion, Ainsworth identified three types of parent-child attachments: secure, avoidant, and resistant (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). A fourth style, known as disorganized attachment, was later added (Main & Solomon, 1990). The most common type of attachment—also considered the healthiest—is called secure attachment (figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7. Physical contact contributes to parent-child attachment. Smiling Woman Carrying Baby at Daytime by Guille Álvarez on Unsplash

In secure attachment, the toddler prefers their primary caregiver over a stranger. The attachment figure is used by the child as a secure base to explore their environment and is sought out in times of stress. Securely attached children were distressed when their caregivers left the room in the Strange Situation experiment, but when their caregivers returned, the securely attached children were happy to see them. Securely attached children have caregivers who are sensitive and responsive to their needs.

With avoidant attachment (sometimes called insecure or anxious-avoidant), the child is unresponsive to the parent, does not use the parent as a secure base, and does not care if the parent leaves. In cases of resistant attachment, children tend to show clingy behavior but then reject the attachment figure's attempts to interact with them (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Children with disorganized attachment freeze, run around the room in an erratic manner or try to run away when the caregiver returns (Main & Solomon, 1990). This type of attachment is seen most often in children who have been abused. Research has shown that abuse disrupts a child's ability to regulate their emotions.

These theories suggest that the attachments we make in early childhood are transferred and displayed in our close relationships throughout life. It is reflected in our belief in ourselves, others, and our social world. While there is evidence to support the correlation of positive attributes such as good self-esteem with secure attachment, poor attachment is not a certain predictor of poor outcomes. Through the understanding of attachment styles and self-reflection, we have the power to move beyond damaging dynamics to build healthy and secure relationships.

It is important to consider cultural differences when examining attachment. A criticism of these studies is that they were completed in Western societies where individualist culture places greater emphasis on the independence, individualism, and self-sufficiency of the child, and typically, children will be largely raised by a few trusted adults. Researchers have pointed out that a child's temperament may have a strong influence on attachment, and others have noted that attachment varies from culture to culture, a factor not accounted for in Ainsworth's research (Gervai, 2009; Harris, 2009; Van Ijzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008). Most notably, research in countries where multiple caregivers are more common has shown that babies can develop a secure attachment to more than one caregiver. This finding predicts secure attachments for children who, for example, live in multigenerational homes or have other loving, consistent caregivers in home or childcare settings.

Collectivist cultures, however, tend to place more emphasis on mutual effort and interdependence, and they tend to include a more community-based method of raising children, including roles for extended family and community networks. Additionally, many young children are taught to help care for infants as primary caregivers, which is not commonplace in many Western cultures. Parenting styles can also have varying effects in different cultures, and while one style of parenting may work well in one culture, it may not be as effective in another.

Levels of emotional expression also vary across different cultures. For example, in sub-Saharan farming communities, emotional expression is seen as disturbing, so children are socialized early in life to maintain neutral expressions. Additionally, while stranger anxiety was treated as a universal norm in the Strange Situation experiment, it has been found that children in these farming communities do not show a predisposition to stranger anxiety. A study conducted in Cameroonian Nso farming communities found that the majority of infants were not afraid of strangers picking them up or moving them away from their mothers. Instead, they were found to display neutral facial expressions and experienced decreased levels of the stress hormone cortisol as the stranger approached (Keller, 2018).

These are just two examples of how children are raised or form attachments. The range of variance in cultural norms can differ based on many factors. It is important to note that these differences do not only occur in other countries. In addition to the dominant culture within the United States, there are also many subcultures or groups within our society whose beliefs and interests differ from the dominant culture. These subcultures originate in part from our multicultural history and may look either very similar to the dominant culture or largely dissimilar (Keller, 2018). Regardless of perceivable differences, it is important to be able to view cultures as valid in their own right. As we move forward, it is important to consider how we conduct studies, including an emphasis on family structures in addition to cultures.

Nature and Nurture

A well-known debate is nature versus nurture, first coined by psychologist Sir Francis Galton in 1869. With this theory, the focus is on two deciding factors of child development: the biological aspect, known as nature, and the environmental aspect, known as nurture. Because both are important, many experts now refer to nature *and* nurture rather than pitting one against the other.

The concept of **nature and nurture** attempts to explain a child's development as well as their outcomes through inherited traits and social influences. Nature attributes are characteristics that are biologically determined, including those inherited from genes. An example of this is a baby who is born with poor vision or a chronic condition such as epilepsy. Another example of this might

be the biological child of two athletes who is also an exceptional athlete—or is that an example of nurture? If those two parents provide many opportunities to be active, receive sports coaching, and observe athletics, it may be more difficult to separate the effects of nature and nurture. Nurture attributes are characteristics developed by socialization. The concept of nurture not only includes academic, artistic, athletic, and social activities but also emphasizes the specific type of parenting style implemented.

When discussing the concept of nurture, it is important to consider equity. The ability to create varied, stimulating, and rich environments varies from family to family. Socioeconomic status is an important factor that affects all aspects of a child's environment, including what kind of home they live in, the neighborhood structure, which school they attend, and what activities they may participate in. It may also impact the amount of time a parent spends with their child; a parent who works several part-time jobs or relies on public transportation, for example, may have less time at home.

The nature and nurture discussion is of great interest to families that include foster and adoptive children. Studies seeking to understand nature and nurture have included biological children who have been raised in different home environments (e.g., adopted into different homes or one living with the biological parents and others living with adoptive parents.) Other studies compare identical twins (who share the same set of genes) and fraternal twins who may grow up together but are more similar to other siblings in their genetic makeup. The video in figure 4.8 from FuseSchool-Global Education describes the nature and nurture debate, looking closely at the study of twins, who are often utilized to better understand the effects of nature and nurture.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 4.8. Nature vs Nurture [YouTube Video]. This video will help you understand the effects of genetics and environment by looking at identical twins. Transcript. "Nature vs. Nurture" by Nature School. License: Standard YouTube License.

Baumrind's Four Styles of Parenting

The categorization of different **parenting styles** is a perspective on child development developed by Diana Baumrind and expanded by E. E. Maccoby and J. A. Martin. The four parenting styles are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved (figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9. This table details four styles of parenting; remember that parents can be anywhere on a continuum among these styles. "Four Styles of Parenting" by Shyanti Franco. License: CC BY 4.0.

Parenting Style	Description	Effects on Development
Authoritarian (Disciplinarian)	Parents value obedience and punish misconduct. Parents are less likely to pay attention to children's pain or difficulties. Parents make decisions unilaterally for children.	Children may grow up to be aggressive, rebellious, and/or indecisive. This style can contribute to low self-esteem.
Authoritative (Democratic)	Parents pay attention to children's needs and strengths. Parents set limits and enforce rules.	Children often become independent, self-reliant, well-liked, and successful in school.
Permissive (Indulgent)	Parents act as a resource without guidance. Parents allow children to make decisions beyond their developmental level.	Children may lack self-discipline and persistence and have poor social skills.

Parenting Style	Description	Effects on Development
Uninvolved (Negligent)	Parents put little to no effort into caring for or raising children.	Children may experience deficits in many aspects of life, including cognition, attachment, emotional skills, and social skills.

Baumrind measured parenting on two dimensions: supportiveness and demandingness. Supportiveness describes characteristics such as paying attention to the unique needs and strengths of each child in order to guide and problem-solve with the child. Demandingness includes having expectations and rules for each child.

Authoritative parenting emphasizes high levels of both supportiveness and demandingness and is considered to produce the most positive outcomes most frequently in the United States. Authoritative parents exhibit interest in their children, pay attention to their unique qualities and experiences, and moderate their demands with this understanding in place.

Authoritarian parenting includes low support combined with a high level of demandingness for children. Parents who utilize this type of parenting are known to be strict and controlling and often use physical punishment. There have been specific studies that support some authoritarian parenting practices among African American families (Jackson-Newsom et al., 2008). Physical punishment may not be seen as negatively in Asian American or African American culture (Chao, 1994; Nievar & Luster, 2000).

In contrast, permissive parents are high in support yet low in demand. Permissive parents are oftentimes too lenient or indulgent with their children, which may cause them to later struggle with authority, self-discipline, persistence, and problem-solving.

Uninvolved or negligent parenting does not provide children with support or control. Uninvolved parents are inattentive emotionally and/or physically. This may occur in families where parents experience severe health issues or other stressors (Li, 2021).

Parents vary in their style and will likely fall into one of these styles along a continuum. A parent may be primarily authoritative but exhibit more support than demandingness, for instance. In addition, many children have two, three, or more parental figures in their lifetimes. Each parent will fall on different places along the continuum or perhaps cross into different styles. It is not simple to correlate parenting styles with child outcomes, but it does help scholars and individuals understand how parenting plays a role in individual and family outcomes.

Concerted Cultivation and Natural Growth

Sociologist Annette Lareau studied the parenting styles of White and Black families that were middle class, working class, and poor during the 1990s (Lareau, 2002). She identified styles that were based more on class than on race known as “concerted cultivation” and “natural growth.”

In Lareau’s findings, middle-class families, both White and Black, were more likely to identify and foster their children’s talents, opinions, and skills. **Concerted cultivation** is an approach in which a parent encourages the development of their child’s talents through the controlled and routine engagement in extracurricular activities, like piano lessons, soccer practice, or scouting activities. Families living within the middle-class economic status observe their parents’ involvement, questioning, and intervening with others. They are also encouraged to think independently, negotiate, and speak up for their own needs. Lareau believes that this prepares children for the dominant culture, which privileges active and informed citizens but also fosters an “emerging sense of entitlement” (Lareau, 2003).

Lower-income families who are poor and/or in the working class prioritize caring for the child and allowing the child to grow naturally in the home or neighborhood. **Natural growth** is a parenting method that allows for a child’s talents to develop spontaneously or naturally. Children interact more with siblings as well as multi-aged neighbors. They may develop more skills in leadership, problem-solving, and caretaking because they are organizing their own activities and games rather than following rules typically designed by adults. They may occasionally engage in structured activities, but these are usually for a limited amount of time. Children observe their parents being helpful and deferential to other adults. At the same time, these parents are often more distrustful of professionals and institutions. Lareau observed that children in lower-class families developed “an emerging sense of constraint.” This sense of constraint may disadvantage children who do not assert themselves in the way the dominant culture and many institutions value.

The neighborhood and home environment, climate change, and increasing reliance on technology both have a significant impact on natural growth. Climate change affects the poor disproportionately; extreme heat, unhealthy air quality, and natural disasters make it more difficult to move easily outdoors. If children live in unsafe or unhealthy areas and cannot get outdoors to play and

socialize, they may be more likely to spend time indoors, limited to using electronic devices, and less likely to reap the positive benefits of natural growth.

Comprehension Self Check

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4.4: Changing Demographics

Population trends that demonstrate changes in lifespan, fertility, and family formation within the United States are connected to the ways that families form and function in their nurturing relationships. These demographic changes are captured via large studies and surveys; most of the data are collected, analyzed, and publicized by the U.S. federal government (or collected separately by states and then combined). These big trends help us to understand how families change over time.

Declining Birth, Fertility, and Fecundity Rates

In addition to the interpersonal aspects of caregiving and parenting, it is important to look at the changes that are occurring as the population ages to birth, fertility, and fecundity rates. Many of these changes are similar in other developed countries, but we will focus on the United States.

It may be helpful to understand the three different rates that are declining. The **birth rate** is the number of live births per 1,000 women in the total population. The **fertility rate** looks more closely at age and tells us proportionally how many women in a specific age group gave birth compared to the total number of women in that age group. Both of these rates are declining in the United States. In addition, the **fecundity rate**, which is the rate of women who are able to give birth and wish to do so, is declining as well.

In general, the population is aging in the United States: People are living longer, and fewer children are being born. The birth rate is declining across all education, income, and age levels, with just one exception. While older women (ages 45 to 49) are having more children, this is a very small number in comparison to all the other groups that are having fewer children (Hamilton et al., 2021).

The graph in figure 4.10 demonstrates the number of live births in the United States between 1990 and 2020 (30 years.) The red line represents the number of actual births in the millions (e.g., there were over 4 million births in 1990 and about 3.6 million births in 2020). The blue line represents the fertility rate per 1,000 women (e.g., there were just over 70 births per 1,000 women in 1990 and 55.8 births per 1,000 women in 2020).

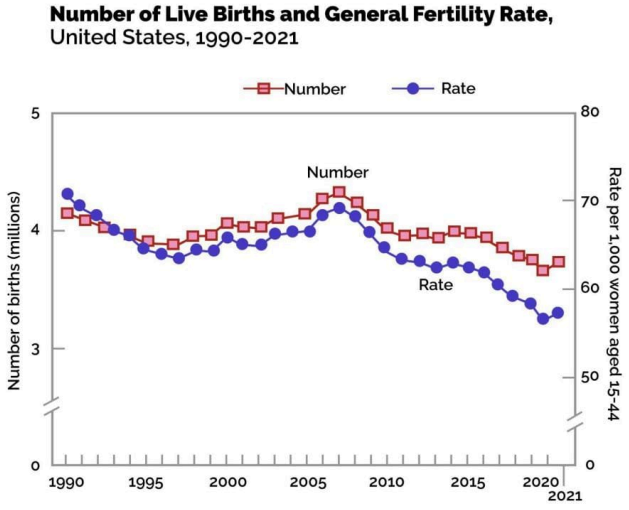


Figure 4.10. Any way that you measure it, there are fewer babies being born in the United States. Image description. "Number of Live Births and General Fertility Rate, United States, 1990–2021" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi-Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0.

Because these rates are declining across all social identities in the United States, it is difficult for researchers to isolate what is contributing to this decline, although economics, medical factors, and climate change are all believed to be factors.

While the **fertility** rate has been on the decline in the United States since 1960, the health and economic crises related to the

COVID-19 pandemic appear to have negatively affected the desire to have children in the United States (Barroso, 2021). Not only has the birth rate dropped lower, but adults are increasingly saying that they don't expect to have children or don't expect to have more children. Again, there does not seem to be one deciding factor that influences the decision, with the majority of childless adults saying that "they just don't want to have children" (Brown, 2021).

Single Parenting, Co-Parenting, and Stepparenting

Children are growing up in a variety of parenting arrangements that include having one "single" parent, being parented by co-parents who live in different homes, and having additional parents who are not biologically or legally related to them (stepparents). And there are variations on these variations. For example, a stepparent may live in the same home, actively parent the child, and not be legally married to the child's parent. Or a stepparent may legally adopt the child, effectively becoming another full parent. To put it simply, our language and terminology have not caught up with the complexity of family structures that involve children.

In six states, however, laws have been passed that recognize that children may have more than two parental attachment figures. These laws expressly allow courts to recognize more than two parents. With parentage come both rights and responsibilities. These laws give children who have multiple adults in their lives access to all of those adults when disputes or tragedies arise.

For example, a child who might have otherwise been assigned to the foster care system when a parent dies could have access to another recognized parental figure, such as a stepparent, aunt, surrogate mother, or egg or sperm donor who has been active in the child's life. In one West Virginia case, this doctrine assigned parental care to both the aunt and uncle who had parented the child, as well as to his legal mother, who rehabilitated herself over a period of 10 years (Josin & NeJaime, 2022). This trend points in the direction of the legal system catching up with the multiple ways that children may be cared for.

Pew Research conducted a randomized, nationally representative study of 1,807 parents in the United States in 2014. While not every family form is captured, this study provides us with an overview of the changing structures of families with children.

The number of children who are living with parents in a first marriage has decreased from 73% in 1960 to 46% in 2014. That means 26% more of 2014's children have diverse living arrangements. Dramatically, more children are living with single parents; 9% lived with single parents in 1960, and 26% lived with single parents in 2014. Seven percent of children lived with cohabiting parents in 2014; this number was zero or unrecorded in 1960 (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Multigenerational Families and Changing Life Expectancy

To fully understand the increase in **multigenerational families** (where more than two generations live together) and **grandfamilies** (where grandparents or great-grandparents provide the primary care for their grandchildren), it is important to note a significant trend in the United States. For centuries, the **mortality rate**, or the rate of death for a particular group in a particular area, had decreased. While rates vary by gender, race, and ethnicity, overall life expectancy rates increased in the United States between 1860 and 2015.

Since 2015, however, life expectancy has dropped for all genders, races, and ethnicities in the United States, with the most dramatic changes occurring in 2021. These most recent changes have been attributed to negative social trends such as diet, sedentary lifestyles, increased medical costs, increased rates of drug use and suicide, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In spite of this recent change, when you look at change over the past century, people in the United States, in general, are living longer, as shown in figure 4.11. This is true for both men and women (Hamilton et al., 2021). They also live healthier and more active lives. This, combined with the decrease in fertility, means that older adults have fewer children and grandchildren who are more widely spaced apart by age. This creates a capacity for both more active grandparenting than in previous generations, as well as the possibility of actual parenting of grandchildren and other caregiving relationships. It is believed that the combination of families having fewer children and living longer has led to more involvement by grandparents with their grandchildren. Simply put, people are living long enough to see their grandchildren be born and to be an active part of their lives.

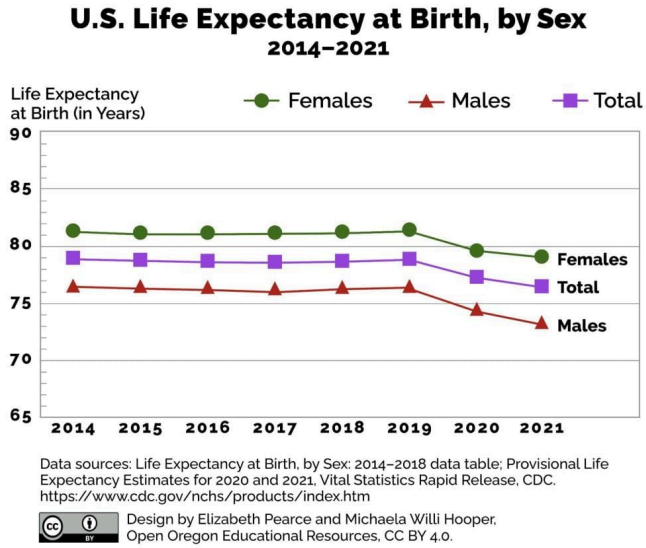


Figure 4.11. While women have had longer life expectancy than men for a long time, both groups faced a significant decline between 2019 and 2021 in the United States. Image description. "U.S. Life Expectancy at Birth, by Sex, 2014–2021" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0. Data from 2008–2018 United States Life Tables; Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for 2020 and 2021, Vital Statistics Rapid Release, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Life expectancy is also correlated with race and ethnicity, as shown in figure 4.12. When we consider family life, we can think about both quality of life and length of life. Both of these figures illustrate important trends in life expectancy. It is important to note that life expectancy in the United States trails other comparable wealthy developed countries.

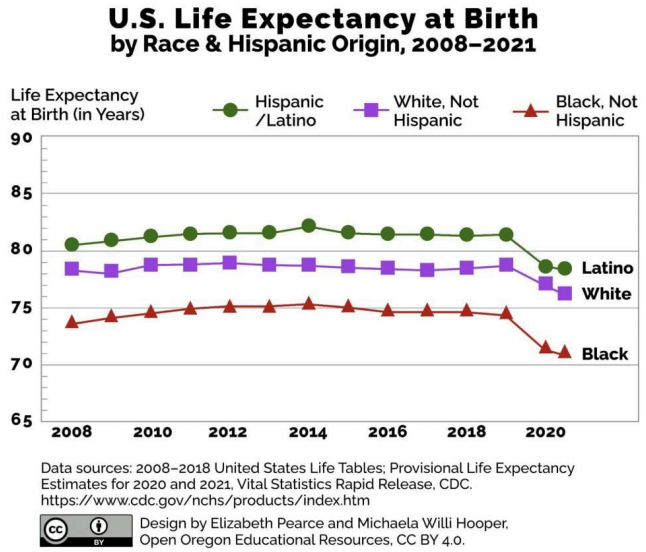


Figure 4.12. While people of all races and ethnicities have seen declines in life expectancy, Latino and Black populations have seen a more dramatic decline between 2018 and 2020. Image description. "U.S. Life Expectancy at Birth by Race & Hispanic Origin, 2008–2021" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0. Data from 2008–2018 United States Life Tables; Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for 2020 and 2021, Vital Statistics Rapid Release, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While life expectancy is declining, parents may increasingly need help from older relatives. Rates of single parents and divorced parents have increased. These parents may call on their own parents for financial support, childcare, shared housing, or other needs. In addition, social problems such as addiction and mass incarceration also contribute to the need for more adults to be involved in parenting. Caregiving and closeness are exchanged across multiple generations, as shown in figure 4.13.

Older adults, including grandparents, are more frequently involved in caregiving and supporting children and grandchildren than ever before. It is important to note that it is not only middle-class or wealthy grandparents who are taking an active role in family

caregiving; poor and working-class grandparents are also stepping in to help out their children and grandchildren.



Figure 4.13. Multigenerational families usually include three generations: children, parents, and grandparents. Grandfamilies usually include grandchildren and grandparents, with the skipped generation of parents playing a range of roles from no involvement to a lot of involvement but not living in the same household. Boy (13–15) with parents and grandparents by moodboard on flickr.com. License: CC BY 2.0.

Multigenerational households are on the rise after reaching a low of 12% in 1980. In 2016, roughly 20% of adults lived in a multigenerational household, with an increase being attributed to the economic recession that started in 2009 (Cohn & Passel, n.d.). The National Association of Realtors reports that multigenerational home purchases increased during the pandemic by four percentage points (Ventiera, 2020). These trends point out the connection between economic change and living arrangements that affect family relationships and structure.

Comprehension Self Check

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4.5: Public Policy and Parenting

Genna Stern and Elizabeth B. Pearce

Public policy can affect the ability of families and caregivers to foster attachment as well, either by supporting or disrupting attachments. These policies may affect attachment intentionally or consequentially, and in some cases policies can cause family attachments and security to become collateral damage. Let's look at some ways that policy affects parent-child attachment.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

On November 20, 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted and opened for signature, becoming officially effective on September 2, 1990. This document is a human rights treaty that outlines a child's right to protection, identity, health care, shelter, nutrition, nondiscrimination, and education (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). A total of 196 countries have adopted this convention, making it one of the most widely adopted human rights treaties in history. However, while the United States participated in the creation of the convention and signed the treaty to acknowledge approval for its content, it is the only member of the United Nations that has not ratified and adopted it into practice.

In order for a treaty to be ratified in the United States, the president must submit the treaty to the Senate, where it requires a two-thirds vote. If the treaty is approved by the Senate, it is then passed back to the president, who can then ratify it. To date, no American president has submitted this treaty to the Senate.

Disrupted Attachment at the United States–Mexico Border

On May 7, 2018, a "zero-tolerance policy" was announced by the U.S. attorney general that addressed unauthorized entry to the United States without acknowledging that many people who cross the border have legal and legitimate asylum claims (Sessions, 2018). This order, which separated adults and children from one another, was applied both to families attempting to immigrate to the United States who have not yet achieved an authorized status as well as those who came to the border with valid asylum claims.

The section of the policy targeted toward separating families was modified by an executive order on June 20, 2018, to promote keeping families together throughout criminal and immigration proceedings; however, this order did not attempt to reunify families who had already been separated. Over the course of those 44 days, over 5,000 families had already been separated, and many adult caregivers were deported without their dependents.

It was not until 958 days later, on February 2, 2021, that the zero-tolerance policy was officially rescinded and replaced by the Executive Order on the Establishment of Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families (Biden, 2021). In essence, this new order intends to protect family unity and establish a task force to assist families who are still separated. At the time this new order was signed, approximately 20% of families who had been affected by the previous orders were still separated (Biden, 2021).

Evidence presented in the court case *Ms. L. v. U.S Immigration & Customs Enforcement* details how forced separation of families is traumatic for adults and children alike; it includes evidence regarding the consequences of separation, which can be especially dire for younger children (*Ms. L. v. U.S Immigration & Customs Enforcement,* 2018). According to the research conducted by Harlow, Ainsworth, and Bowlby, bonds must be formed with a primary caregiver and will last throughout all stages of life, and attachment at an early age is considered foundational to future bonds with friends, families, and partners. Additionally, if we look at Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, the growth process for both the caregiver and the child would be disrupted. For the child, this disruption would be due to the inability of the primary caregiver to provide adequate support due to separation, and for the caregiver, this could contribute to feelings of failure, regret, and despair that could persist and present long after the situation is resolved.

In children, disruption of attachment can lead to developmental delays, decreased psychological development, and mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety disorders. Additionally, extreme levels of stress and trauma, like that which is present during forceful family separation, have been shown to have the capacity to cause physical changes to the body in areas such as brain development and organ system formation. Therefore, this trauma can potentially lead to altered brain development and cognitive impairment. Children who experience traumatic events also tend to experience poverty and food

insecurity at higher rates.

Apart from the physical, mental, and developmental health risks, non-citizen children who have been removed from their families can experience unstable care settings due to families not having available support systems to provide care or the ability to contact support systems that are in place. Additionally, it has been shown that any separation of a child from their family increases their susceptibility to exploitation or abuse.

The following *New York Times* video provides a firsthand look at the impacts of separation on a family who came to the United States–Mexico border seeking asylum but were separated at the border under the zero-tolerance policy in 2018 (figure 4.14). It also explores the similar experiences of two other families in the same village.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 4.14. Inside a Young Migrant's Family Separation Nightmare [YouTube Video]. Watch this video to understand the pain of separation that many immigrant and refugee families experience. Transcript. "Inside a Young Migrant's Family Separation Nightmare" © *The New York Times*. License: Standard YouTube License.

Disrupted Attachment during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, borders between many countries, as well as some states, were closed or heavily regulated in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus. One unintentional consequence of these border closures was the separation of families who commute across state lines or who were traveling otherwise prior to these closures. The borders between both the United States and Mexico and the United States and Canada were closed to all nonessential travel starting in March 2020 through 2021.

Closures such as these were not unique to the United States, as many countries around the world also closed their borders to combat the spread of the virus. In fact, as of May 2021, there were still at least 173 unaccompanied minors in India who had been separated from their primary caregivers due to travel restrictions put in place by their home country of Australia; many of these were staying with relatives prior to the border closures and were too young to be considered for government-sponsored repatriation flights (Wertheimer, 2021). If you would like to know more, you can read more about this story here.

To read and discuss the story of a mother of five from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who was separated from her children, look into Going Deeper at the end of the chapter.

In the following sections, we will discuss families with particular challenges and characteristics using the ecological model.

Immigrant and Refugee Families

Now, we will look at how the ecological systems theory proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner can be applied to current families. The ecological framework assumes that families interact within multiple environments that mutually influence each other. These environments include the microsystem (the systems in immediate surroundings, such as family, neighborhood, work, or school), the mesosystem (the ways in which these immediate systems connect, such as the relationships between neighborhood and school), the exosystem (the larger social system, such as the stress of another family member's job), the macrosystem (cultural values of the local and larger community), and the chronosystem (such as immigration policy that influences access and changes over time) (Ballard et al., 2019).

In the context of a refugee family, the family might be influenced by their microsystem (e.g., whether or not members were injured as they fled the persecution and parental conflict while fleeing), their mesosystem (e.g., teachers and school personnel who are struggling with their own trauma from fleeing conflict or personal troubles and thus have limited ability to provide robust services),

their exosystem (e.g., local leaders who do not consult with women living in shelters regarding their resource needs and don't provide feminine hygiene products or children's toys), and countless other environments (Hoffman & Kruczek, 2011). The family may have access to and be able to directly influence their mesosystem and, at the same time, feel powerless to make changes in the exosystem. Activism is one way to influence systems, as shown in figure 4.15. Each of these environments will challenge and contribute to their coping skills.



Figure 4.15. Protesting is one way that people can influence their macrosystems and chronosystems, but for people who are struggling with meeting basic needs, it can be difficult. "Minneapolis Protest against Arizona Immigrant law SB 1070." License: CC BY 2.0.

With its focus on interaction within multiple environments, the ecological systems framework is an incredibly useful lens to employ cross-cultural contexts when considering immigrant families. For example, a researcher could ask, "How do Hmong immigrant families manage financial resources in their new environment in the United States?" and "How did Hmong families manage their financial resources while still living in Laos?" The theory helps us understand that immigrant families are operating within more complex systems because they have lived in more than one dominant culture. The needs, values, and environments within each culture are important to the family (Solheim & Yang, 2010).

The family system has certain needs, including physical needs for resources and interpersonal needs for relationships. Parenting children is one of those primary needs. If their current situation does not meet these needs, the family system will engage in management to meet those needs within their value systems.

Justice-Involved Families

Having a family member who is "justice-involved" (i.e., has had any interaction with the justice system as a defendant) creates family stress; this is discussed in Chapter 11. Here we will focus specifically on how incarceration affects the nurturing relationships between parents and children.

There is a growing recognition that incarceration has significant negative effects on the family structure, a notable point given that over half of the 2.5 million individuals incarcerated in the United States are parents (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Maruschak et al., 2021). Over the last several decades, researchers have started to parse how periods of incarceration influence the children and family members left behind. This work has demonstrated the long-term consequences that incarceration can have on the family unit. Researchers have also offered potential remedies to lessen the consequences to children, such as parenting courses during periods of incarceration.

Separation from children due to incarceration or other factors is a significant acute and long-term stressor (Beckmeyer & Arditti, 2014). There is evidence that such separation is linked to institutional misconduct (e.g., violating institutional rules) and psychiatric distress among incarcerated parents (Loper et al., 2009; Houck & Loper, 2002). The extent to which separation distress contributes to such risk may be dependent on a number of other factors, such as the availability of an alternative caregiver, support within the institution, and the nature of parent-child relationships prior to incarceration (Arditti, 2016).

It is also important to explore gender role differences within the context of incarceration. Women tend to take on a larger role in terms of childcare duties prior to involvement with the criminal justice system and are more often primary caretakers of children than men. Therefore, mothers who are incarcerated may experience especially great stress associated with child separation (McBride et al., 2002; Pedersen, 2012).

Within the parent-child dyad, both individuals experience significant changes to their microsystem when a parent is incarcerated. The parent is replaced by an alternative caregiver(s) in the child's life. The parent does not likely have such a replacement for the child (someone to care for on a daily basis). In addition, the home environment changes dramatically for the parent and possibly for the child as well. There is now an additional institution—a very powerful one—in the parent's life, which becomes part of the child's exosystem. How well does this new institution interact with the other important aspects of the child's life—their school, their caregiver's workplace, their place of worship, and other structures? Jails and prisons are known for rigid policies, including those that involve family visits. It is highly likely that the child's mesosystem, or the ways that the various institutions within their lives interact well with one another, has become more difficult and complicated. Systems-level barriers (e.g., the institution itself) and interpersonal barriers (e.g., the relationship with the caregiver) affect the extent to which parents can have contact with their children.

The after-effects of incarceration, including multiple transitions and increased unemployment, continue to impact parenting and other nurturing relationships within kinship groups.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=873#h5p-22

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"Justice-Involved Families" includes an excerpt from Challenges Associated with Parenting while Incarcerated by Monika Dargis and Arielle Mitchell-Somoza that has been lightly edited and then combined with an application of the ecological systems theory by Elizabeth B. Pearce. License: MDPI Open Access Policy.

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4.6: Family Forms and Functions

This text began with a chapter about ideas that are socially constructed, including the picture of the traditional or ideal family. That nuclear family model, often represented as two White, married, heterosexual, middle-class parents with 2.2 children, is only one form of families involving caregiving and sometimes children. Figure 4.16 illustrates another family form. In this section, we will distinguish between family form and family functionality.

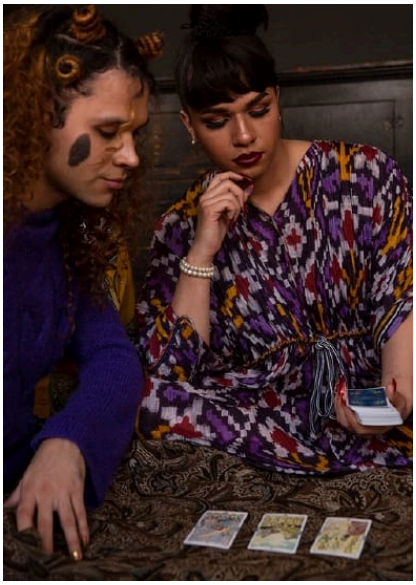


Figure 4.16. Family structure or form, such as one parent and one child, is separate from the health of the family or the family function. "A Genderfluid person and a Transgender Woman Practicing Tarot" by Zackary Drucker and The Gender Spectrum Collection. License: CC BY 4.0.

Families come in many forms, including those described previously. Family forms include parents who are married, living together, divorced, stepparents, adoptive parents, single parents, grandparents in parenting roles, and foster parents. Forms may include blended and stepfamilies, half-siblings, and stepsiblings. The form of any household may include more than two generations or people who are not related legally or by blood. All of these are differing forms, or structures, of family life, such as the one pictured in 4.17. The **family form** is merely the physical makeup of the family members in relationship to one another. In academic literature, these differing forms are sometimes called the "complexities" of family life. The form does not indicate how healthy the family is or how well the family members behave toward one another, known as the **family function**.

Families function in a range of ways and differently over time. How well does any given family function? That answer is complicated to measure in one moment and also over time. It includes the functionality of each individual family member, the functionality of any two members' relationship, and the overall functionality of the entire family. What indicates healthy functionality? Here are a couple of indicators; you may also have your own standards of what indicates healthy functioning:

- Respect for the individuality of each family member
- Communication that is direct but not purposefully harmful or painful
- Commitment to each other
- Parent(s) who prioritize their children's needs



Figure 4.17. Family forms have developed and changed over time, and there is no one typical family structure. "Father, Walking, Nature" by Laubenstein Ronald. License: CC BY 4.0.

It is important to understand and to separate form and functionality. Because many of our social institutions identify one kind of family as "the norm," it is easy to assume that somehow other kinds of families are "less than." That is not the case. As discussed throughout this text, family forms have developed and changed over time. It is critical to note that there are many well-functioning families that include single parents, gay parents, parents who are poor, have been incarcerated, or have lots of children, or people who have no children. All families face challenges, and families that look "perfect" on the outside may have **dysfunction** behaviors that cause harm to the self, family members, or society. As you navigate the world, do your best to keep this in mind because the societal message is often the opposite. Throughout this chapter, we discuss families who may not fit that idealized family form but who are just as likely to have loving, functional family relationships.

Families without Children

An increasing number of partnered adults are completing their families without having children. As discussed earlier, all three rates (birth, fertility, and fecundity) are declining in the United States. This section will discuss the societal stigma that can be associated with not having children.

Childless or Childfree?

For many decades in the United States, there was a predictive life course for heterosexual, White, middle-class families. This was considered the ideal, a part of the "American Dream." Steps included going to school, starting a career, getting married, and then "starting a family," which really meant having children. Couples were expected to produce babies soon after marriage.

But this norm, never attainable for all families, has become increasingly diversified. Now, it is known that a family can be a "family" without including children. There is greater awareness of the difficulties that a heterosexual couple may have with conceiving a child. There is greater acceptance of same-sex couples who may have difficulty adopting or using medical and biological means to procreate. And there is an increased understanding of couples who do not wish to have children and consider their families complete without them. These families express their desire to remain childfree by choice.

However, increased awareness and acceptance do not equate with the disappearance of social stigma. Harmful viewpoints that equate pregnancy with "becoming a woman" or that describe men as more masculine if they get someone pregnant quickly continue to resonate in our society, along with the idea that one's life is not "complete" until they have children.

Same-Sex Parenting

LGBTQIA+ parenting refers to the care and guidance of children by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer parents, as well

as other members of this broad community. People within this community can become parents through various means, including but not limited to adoption, foster care, insemination, other medical pregnancy methods, and surrogacy.

LGBTQIA+ parents have been proven to be as effective as heterosexual parents (although this comparison in and of itself reflects the binary heteronormative standard, itself a social construction). The primary research in this area has been conducted on same-sex parents. This research was originally driven by the desire for data when parents divorced and one parent identified as gay. Both heterosexual and LGBTQIA+ parents sought rationales that would justify the child custody arrangement that they preferred.

In Focus: Science Twins

Our journey to parenthood was long, complicated, and full of science. When you're trying to conceive as a same-sex couple, you learn just how miraculous the conception of life really is.

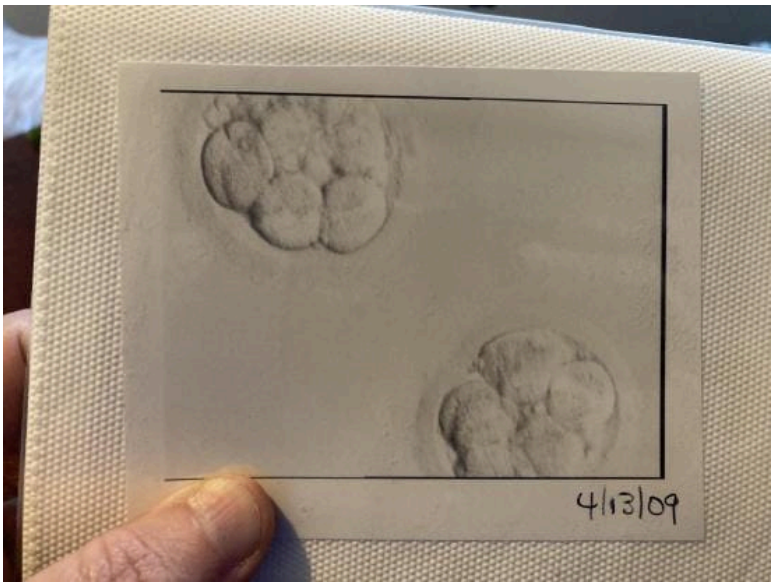


Figure 4.18. This picture of embryos shows the earliest photo of our son (we're pretty sure he's the one on the right). Five years later, an embryo from this same batch, which had been frozen since its conception in 2009, grew into our son's little brother. We call our children "science twins" and tell them all about the science that brought them onto this earth. We're so grateful that our dream of having a family became a reality. "Science Twins" by Leslie Hammond. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

An argument against LGBTQIA+ parenting has been made that children will face bullying and harassment in either the public arena or in court cases involving child custody. It is true that these families face marginalization and discrimination. But is this a reason to deny these families their rights, essentially marginalizing them further? These authors argue that, like other families from marginalized groups, it is the work of social institutions and society to diminish and eliminate the causes of discrimination.

Foster and Adoptive Families

One way to protect children from abuse or neglect is to remove them from their primary caregivers and place them into foster care or with family members. Foster care is regulated by the states, but it generally consists of a system in which a minor is placed into a private home of a state-certified caregiver referred to as a "foster parent," with a family member, or occasionally in a group setting approved by the state. The placement of the child is arranged through the government or a social service agency. The state, via its child services department, maintains responsibility for the child.

In the United States, the number of children in foster care steadily grew between 2010 and 2019 from about 405,000 to roughly 424,000, when it began to level off and drop to 391,098 in 2021. As of February 2023, 113,589 children in foster care are waiting to be adopted (AFCARS Report #29, 2023). This means that these children's parents have lost their legal rights and custody, leaving them without any permanent legal caregivers (the government assumes this responsibility until someone adopts the children). The average age of youth waiting to be adopted from foster care is eight years old.

Families with Disabled Members

Disabled people have always faced problems because society is structured without disability in mind. For instance, the rail transport system assumes that all passengers can step over a gap between a train and the platform, that they can walk to their seat, and indeed, that sitting in a "standardized" seat is an option. There are countless practices that exclude or marginalize disabled people. The way things routinely get done in everyday life can be problematic for disabled people, from the material infrastructure of a building to the ways people interact. For instance, people with dementia might rely on familiar, clear signage to find their way in and out of a building, but they also need people who will give them time to communicate and wait for a response in a respectful way.

How can we start to understand the ways that social structures interact with families who have members with disabilities? It is important to understand the dichotomy between the social and medical model of disability. The medical model, which has dominated thinking in the United States, sees the individual with a difference in ability as having a personal problem. The social model focuses on the society and culture disabled individuals live in, making adjustments that allow all people to access activities and services. An example of an adaptation is shown in figure 4.19.

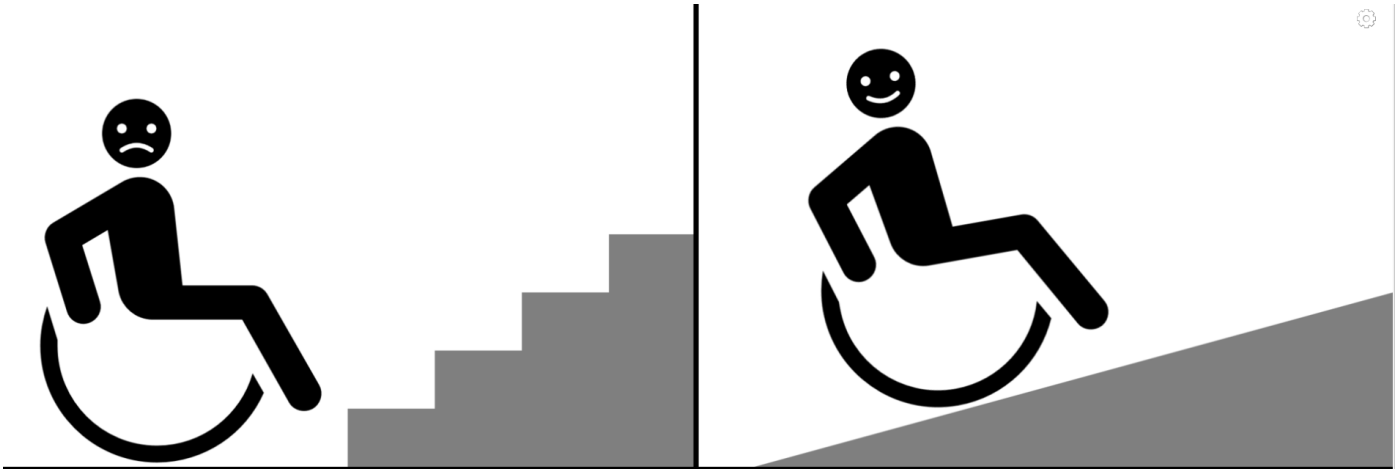


Figure 4.19. The first image focuses on the individual having a problem. The second image shows how an adapted environment can contribute to equity in access. "A Wheelchair User's Problems Being Caused by an Inaccessible Environment" by MissLunaRose12. License: CC BY-SA 4.0.

The social model directs our attention toward the external barriers facing disabled people, and now we need to find better ways of analyzing and understanding those barriers. It also emphasizes that people who have a disability can be active participants in deciding what kinds of societal supports and policies will be effective.

A disabled family member affects all other members of the family as well as the overall family dynamic. Parents and caregivers must respond to the disabled child who faces more systemic challenges to participating in daily life. While there are services and funding available for families with disabled members, there is not a centralized system, forcing families to spend valuable time and financial resources to apply for these assets. Many parents believe that the available resources are not sufficient—if parents need to focus on one child accessing basic activities such as school, health care, or transportation, they may have less time or financial resources for their other children or partners.

Caring for adults, such as siblings, close friends, or parents, also affects family dynamics. When those adults are able to find support that removes society's barriers, it can positively affect the rest of the family. One more common reason for adult caregiving within a family is dementia and related diseases. As people are living longer, the number of adults who face Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia is increasing.

Here are some words from the Forget-Me-Not Club, a dementia support group in the United Kingdom:

> Everyone will tell you the same thing. You're diagnosed, and then it's "You've got dementia. Go home and we'll see you next month." What we need is for someone, like a counselor or someone else with dementia, to tell us at that point, "Life isn't over." You can go on for ten or fifteen years. And you're not told, you're just left. And I thought, tomorrow my day had come. The fear and the anxiety sets in, and then the depression sets in, doesn't it? I think when you're diagnosed, you should be given a book. And on the front of the book, in big letters, it should say: "Don't panic" (Forget-

Me-Not Club, n.d.).

These are people who do not want to be seen through a medical lens as individual tragedies; they are turning a dementia diagnosis into a situation where they are in control and can support each other and make their voices heard. However, social practice theory also reminds us about the importance of material resources. For instance, in order to meet each other and have a collective sense of peer support, people need to have spaces that are not institutionalized that they feel they can "own." All too often, we have seen very well-intentioned group activities taking place in old, large halls or where people are routinely sitting in configurations that make communication difficult. However, we have also seen the Forget-Me-Not Club, in an ordinary, homely environment, where staff members interact on a basis of equality with the members who have dementia.

This is just one of many examples where we are finding that people *can* do things differently and where society can move toward inclusion and empowerment.

In Focus: Dreaming of Juniper

When you have children, you have certain dreams for them. There are big ones, like going to college, getting married, having their own children. There are smaller ones, like taking their first steps, learning to ride a bike, or shopping for a prom dress. But what happens when those dreams can't become a reality? How do we celebrate our children for who they are while still allowing ourselves the ability to mourn our dreams?



Figure 4.20 Juniper in a sun hat, playful and silly. "Juni in Sun Hat" by Hailey Adkisson. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

When Juniper was six months old, we noticed she was exhibiting some strange movements; her arms would jerk up, her body would crunch, and her head would dip. At first, it would happen every few days in a cluster of 5 to 10. Later, these movements began happening at every sleep/wake cycle and lasted for 20 to 40 at a time.

Maybe it was reflux? Maybe it was just a weird baby movement? We contacted her pediatrician and were told if she was breathing regularly, it wasn't an emergency. Something told me this wasn't quite right, and we drove to the nearest emergency room for another opinion. The doctors there saw Juniper having the movements, but like her pediatrician, they told us not to worry.

I tried to reassure myself of this as we drove an hour to the nearest children's hospital the next day, but I knew in my gut that something was seriously wrong. Juniper was hooked up to an electroencephalogram (EEG) to test for abnormalities in her brain waves. When the attending physician came into the room, the look on his face told me it wasn't good news.

Juniper was diagnosed with a rare and catastrophic form of pediatric epilepsy called Infantile Spasms (IS). Each movement we were seeing was actually a tiny seizure, and she was having hundreds a day. In addition to seizures, her background brain activity presented in a pattern called hypsarrhythmia. Think of this as static on a radio. It's hard to comprehend the story because the static keeps interrupting the message. Additionally, each seizure was as if her brain was "rebooting" like a computer—shutting down, then starting back up. If we didn't stop the hypsarrhythmia and the spasms, Juniper would not be able to develop because

she wouldn't be able to encode anything she was experiencing or learning. Her brain would be too cluttered.

The outcome of IS on children largely depends on how they respond to treatment and what the underlying cause of the seizures is. Epilepsy is a symptom of something else: genetic variations, metabolic syndromes, a traumatic brain injury, or brain malformations. A child could respond quickly to treatment, but they could have a genetic variation that causes intellectual and physical disabilities in the future.

First, stop the spasms. Then, figure out the cause.

Juniper was prescribed an extremely high-dose steroid treatment that we injected into her chubby baby thighs twice a day. My beautiful and happy baby gained five pounds in a month and was miserable. Unfortunately, it didn't stop the spasms. Another medication with horrible side effects, another relapse. At this point, we decided to get a second opinion, and it was discovered that the cause of Juniper's seizures was a malformation called focal cortical dysplasia.

Juniper celebrated her first birthday hooked up to an EEG. Four days later, she underwent a hemispherectomy. This aggressive surgery involved removing half of her brain in the hope that removing the dysplasia while she was young would allow her brain to rewire itself. While we achieved seizure freedom, it didn't come without a cost. Juniper lost vision on the left side of both her eyes. She had paralysis in her left arm and left leg and will never have fine motor skills in her left hand. She will likely have trouble with numbers, memory, self-control, and emotional regulation. Her chance of autism increased. She may be nonverbal.



Figure 4.21. Hailey and Juniper snuggle in a hospital bed. "Hospital Snuggles" by Hailey Adkisson. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

As a parent, you make decisions on behalf of your child every day in hopes of providing them with the best quality of life. While our decision was one I wish no other parent ever had to make, our goal was still the same: We needed to give Juniper a chance at the best quality of life, and that meant surgery.

But what is a "good" quality of life? For Juniper, it can't be based on our norms—a house, a good job, financial security, a marriage, 2.5 kids, and a Labrador.

So, is it mobility? Independent feeding? Verbal communication? What if that isn't her reality? Does that mean she has a bad life? How do I know if my daughter has a good life? To know, I have to ask myself:

Is she happy?

Is she comfortable?

Is she safe?

Constant seizures would not allow her to be any of these things.

While I don't know what Juniper will be able to do in the future, there are some obvious limitations. When my son asked if Juniper

would be able to have babies, I cried. These are not Juniper's dreams; they are mine. My children are an extension of my own dreams. While I hope she never feels a loss of anything and thinks her life is beautiful and amazing, I will feel that loss. Like any loss, it will take time to grieve.

It's hard to explain what it is like to have a child with a disability. You love them fiercely and are amazed by them every day, but you also mourn what could have been. You get to celebrate every tiny thing, moments I missed with my son because they happened so quickly. At the same time, you wish life wasn't so challenging for them and that things like "pushing to sit" came naturally.

The uncertainty about Juniper can be incapacitating at times because there is so much we don't know. What I do know is that she has changed me.

I am stronger than I thought I was. I am more resilient. I learned how to advocate for my child, look a doctor in the eyes, and demand a plan. I learned the importance of trusting my gut when it comes to parenting. I often think back to what would have happened if I had brushed off my intuition in those early days of her diagnosis. Juniper looked and acted like a "normal" baby. Even after her spasms became more intense and I documented an episode on video, her pediatrician at the time and an entire team of ER doctors told us not to worry—it was no big deal. The truth is that IS is an emergency. It is an extremely rare and catastrophic form of epilepsy that often goes misdiagnosed for months (even by medical professionals). If left untreated, IS can have devastating impacts on development.

Most importantly, I have learned to appreciate tiny moments of joy that I never slowed down to see before. While I still experience deep grief about the trauma my daughter and my family have gone through, I try to stay focused on the present as much as possible. Yes, my dreams for my daughter have had to shift. Instead of mourning what she won't be able to do, I try to focus on who she is now.



Figure 4.22 .Juniper has wonderful happy times with her family, as well as big challenges. "Juni at home" and "Juni on the Move" by Hailey Adkisson. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Juniper has a smile that seems too big for her face and a belly laugh that fills an entire room with joy. She loves being outside, especially when she is in her swing. She will grab at any necklace, watch, or shiny thing within reach. There isn't a food she dislikes. She's addicted to her pacifier. Her brother is her favorite person.

Juniper is more than her disability. She is more than her seizures. She is more than her brain surgery. Her journey hasn't fit with the dreams I had for my children, but dreams change. They have to. Otherwise, you'll miss out on the beautiful reality that's right in front of you.



Figure 4.23. Hailey and Juniper smile at each other. “Mother-Daughter” by Hailey Adkisson. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Hailey Adkisson, MA, is a full-time community college professor, a wife, a mother of three, and, in her “free time,” an unofficial therapist, nurse, and pharmacist to her daughter, Juniper, who has med-resistant epilepsy. Since her daughter’s diagnosis, Hailey has immersed herself in the disability community, connecting with families across the country who have young children with medical complexities. She believes building community is key to providing support for parent caregivers like herself. You can reach out to Hailey at @growing_juniper on Instagram.

Poverty

Throughout this textbook, you will read about how families who experience poverty are impacted in terms of their daily needs: housing, food, water, education, and more. Each chapter will delve into one of these specific needs and highlight how socioeconomic status combined with other social characteristics such as sex, gender, race, and ethnicity contribute to intersectionality and the likelihood of discrimination.

But how does poverty affect the public function of caregiving in families?

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, socioeconomic status, more than race or ethnicity, has been identified as a key correlator of the strategies and practices that parents use to raise their children. Why this is so is a difficult question to answer. It can be deduced that parents with a higher socioeconomic status have more resources and, therefore, more choices about where they live and what activities their children are involved in.

Does this make their parenting or their love for their children superior? Of course not. But it does tell us that they may be able to afford options for their families that others cannot. Poverty affects family dynamics in at least two ways. First, because in reality, “time is money,” parents who are poor often have less time and less money, so they have less time to spend with their children. Second, because they are at the lower end of the class structure, they are more likely to be discriminated against based on socioeconomic status than other families. Both of these factors may lead to others seeing them as less devoted to parenting, but it is actually poverty that is getting in the way, not a lack of love or care for their children.

Families in lower socioeconomic groups face more judgment and discrimination. Parents in these groups may have to make more difficult choices with both time and money, such as, “Should I make a home-cooked meal, or should I sit on the floor and play with my child—which means I have to serve a frozen meal?” Even that choice may create more choices, as a prepared frozen meal will likely cost more than something that takes time to assemble. “Should I pay for this needed car repair or for a new pair of shoes for my child?” presents related dilemmas. Enter the societal culture that judges parents on what can be seen: worn-out shoes or new shoes?

In this text, we will continually look for systemic solutions to social problems, such as the number of families in the United States who experience poverty. Enlightening research tells us that it is possible to impact families positively via social programs. A recent study led by Columbia University in New York demonstrates the effect of cash gifts to poor families:

> This study demonstrates the causal impact of a poverty reduction intervention on early childhood brain activity. Data from the Baby's First Years study, a randomized control trial, show that a predictable, monthly unconditional cash transfer given to low-income families may have a causal impact on infant brain activity. In the context of greater economic resources, children's experiences changed, and their brain activity adapted to those experiences...
>
> Early childhood poverty is a risk factor for lower school achievement, reduced earnings, and poorer health, and has been associated with differences in brain structure and function. Whether poverty causes differences in neurodevelopment, or is merely associated with factors that cause such differences, remains unclear. Here, we report estimates of the causal impact of a poverty reduction intervention on brain activity in the first year of life...
>
> In sum, using a rigorous randomized design, we provide evidence that giving monthly unconditional cash transfers to mothers experiencing poverty in the first year of their children's lives may change infant brain activity. Such changes reflect neuroplasticity and environmental adaptation and display a pattern that has been associated with the development of subsequent cognitive skills (Troller-Renfree et al., 2022).

This study lends hope that the cycle of poverty can be interrupted. Policies and programs that contribute to equity can make a positive difference in the outcomes for families experiencing poverty. Unfortunately, child poverty continues to be high in this country.

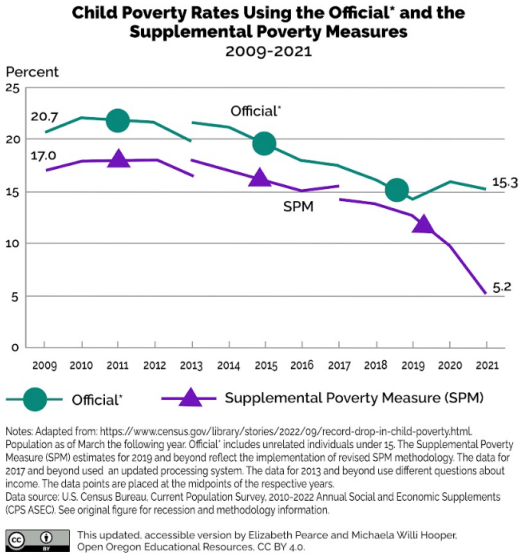


Figure 4.24. This graph shows that when cash benefits are given to families on a monthly basis (rather than a lump sum), child poverty can be dramatically reduced (purple line). Image description. "Child Poverty Rates Using the Official and Supplemental Poverty Measures" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on data from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010-2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplements (CPS ASEC). See original figure for recession and methodology information.

A recent federal policy demonstrates a practical application of cash benefits. In the American Rescue Plan of 2021, the Child Tax Credit was not only expanded but also distributed differently. Prior to 2021, parents received the child tax credit in a lump sum after submitting their taxes. Many expenses related to having children, such as childcare, rent/mortgage, transportation, and extracurricular activities, are payable monthly or weekly—not in one lump sum. But in 2021, families received a monthly distribution of about $250 to $300 a month (The White House, n.d.). Not only was this monthly income predictable, but it was also expanded to the poorest families—those who do not pay income taxes—who were previously excluded from this benefit. This resulted in a dramatic decrease in child poverty, as shown in figure 4.24. Unfortunately, the extension of this program has now been eliminated.

COVID-19 Pandemic

It is difficult to imagine a more life-altering period of time than the COVID-19 pandemic from late 2019 to the present day. If we look back at the ecological systems theory, this pandemic qualifies as a chronosystem: a large sociohistorical event that ripples inward through the concentric circles of families' lives. It has affected the cultural practices of our macrosystem (like

wearing masks and social distancing); it has changed exosystem elements such as restaurants, stores, and places of worship; and it has dramatically altered our microsystem settings such as workplaces, schools, and perhaps even our homes. And what of the mesosystem, the connections and relationships between all of these systems? Well, by inference, those have been changed as well.

Large catastrophic events are known to be linked with mental health burdens. Caregivers are not exempt from these mental health changes; in fact, they may be greater than for those who are not caring for others. While the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are unknown, it is likely that individual and family outcomes will be changed. Already it is known that K–12 and college students are experiencing much higher levels of depression (Active Minds, 2020). With people of all ages experiencing mental health challenges, it is likely that this will affect their parent-child relationships and other caregiving connections.

Comprehension Self Check

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www.census.gov/library/stori...ld-povertyhtml

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4.7: Looking Ahead- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Real-world current events demonstrate the importance of attachment for child development, as well as the impact that disrupted attachments can cause. Separation does not only impact an individual; it can have far-reaching consequences, changing how children learn to view the world and develop, interact with their communities, and react to stressful situations. They are at a higher risk for psychological disorders and physical health problems, and they are at a greater risk for substance abuse as adults.

There are known strategies for supporting children who are experiencing trauma, such as the ones included in a resource from The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. This document groups children into three age groups: preschool or younger, school-aged, and adolescents, and it provides a general overview of how trauma might present within those three age groups, as well as suggestions for how support systems can best assist in helping children cope with trauma (NCTSNadmin, 2018). These strategies will be useful as the world works to support the isolation and trauma that is evident both for intact families experiencing the pandemic and for families that have endured separation during this time.

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4.8: Going Deeper

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Genna Stern

Now that you've read more deeply about caregiving and kinship relationships, this page has some resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- Read the Pew Research: *Parenting in America* summary for nuanced distinctions regarding family formation, where children are living, and current parenting concerns.
- Watch this seven-minute video titled "Raising Children for a Second Time, 'Grandfamilies' Struggle during the Pandemic" to learn more about grandfamilies.
- An idea related to nature and nurture that has recently gained attention is "orchid children and dandelion children." Dr. Thomas Boyce has theorized that most children are "dandelions": resilient and hardy, able to withstand some difficulties and continue to thrive. In contrast, some children are "orchids": more delicate and sensitive. These children may also develop well as long as their sensitive nature is acknowledged and a stable, responsive environment is provided. This kind of framing may help parents and caregivers see the importance of environmental and parenting choices. To read or listen to more about this emerging theory, click here for an article and recording by National Public Radio.
- This clip from a Crash Course video looks at both Harry Harlow's and Mary Ainsworth's work and gives a quick summary of Diana Baumrind's parenting styles. Review this if you would like more information about this research and theory.
- There are many resources aimed at educating parents and caregivers on how to build secure attachments, such as the Child Welfare Information Gateway, which compiles information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration for Children and Families, and the Children's Bureau.
- For statistics about adoption and foster care, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Adoption and Foster Care Statistics website.
- To learn more about the social model of disability from the perspective of a person diagnosed with autism, listen to this TED Talk with Jac den Houting.
- Listen to the "Baby Bust: Explaining the Declining U.S. Birth Rate" episode of the 1A podcast if you would like to understand more about declining childbearing rates, including its relationship to medical issues, economics, culture, and the environment.
- To read the most recent provisional birth rate data in the U.S., refer to the National Vital Statistics Systems Rapid Release Reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Click the link to read more on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Check out The National Child Traumatic Stress Network here.

Reflective Questions

1. What are the benefits to self and to society of nurturing relationships?
2. Explain the importance of caregiving relationships using a family or parenting theory or perspective.

3. In what ways do social structures such as the economy and the environment relate to changes in family size and structure?
4. This chapter focuses on the disruption of attachment for a wide range of families and children. Discuss why attachment is so important not just to individual families but also to society.
5. How does the government influence caregiving, parenting, and attachment?
6. Which families are most likely to be affected negatively by government policies?
7. What is the difference between family forms and family functions? How is this distinction critical to the health of families and society?
8. What are some social stigmas associated with parenting and with being childless?

Key Terms

- **Attachment theory:** the theory that the capacity to form emotional attachments to others is primarily developed during infancy and early childhood.
- **Birth rate:** the number of live births per 1,000 women in the total population.
- **Caregiving:** the act of providing support or watching over a person.
- **Concerted cultivation:** a parenting style that emphasizes adult-led enrichment programs for children.
- **Dysfunction:** behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or society.
- **Ecological systems theory:** a framework that looks at individuals within their environments.
- **Family form:** the structure of a family, including the members and their relationships to one another.
- **Family function:** the way a family's members behave toward each other and within society.
- **Fecundity rate:** the reproductive rate for people who want to have biological children who are able to get pregnant and give birth.
- **Fertility rate:** the number of people in a specific age range who are able to give birth.
- **Grandfamily:** a family in which grandparents are the primary caregivers to their grandchildren; usually, the parents are not present.
- **Mortality rate:** the rate of death for a particular group or in a particular area.
- **Multigenerational families:** more than two generations of a family living together.
- **Natural growth:** a parenting style that emphasizes child-led games and activities, often in multi-age groups from the same family or neighborhood.
- **Nature and nurture:** a discussion about the relationship between biological and environmental factors in a child's development.
- **Parenting styles:** usually refers to Baumrind's four styles of parenting, which include authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved.

Activity: Esther's Story

"Esther," a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was forcibly separated from five of her children during the civil conflict in the early 2000s. She spent years in a refugee camp and was eventually resettled to North Carolina without her children. Upon her arrival in the United States, she petitioned U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to bring her children here. USCIS required that Esther provide birth certificates to prove her relationship to her children, all minors, but these documents did not exist. Incurring months of extra delay, Esther contacted relatives in the Congo who procured retroactive documentation of the relationship. USCIS then approved the petition and transferred the file to the United States Embassy in Kinshasa, the Congo's capital. In order to continue processing, the children had to travel to Kinshasa for visa interviews. But the children lived on the other side of the country, hundreds of miles away, and the journey to Kinshasa was extremely dangerous. Esther had no choice, however, and raised money from her church to fly them to the capital in a small plane. On the day of their interview, they were turned away from the embassy because they lacked the requisite paperwork, which was in the United States with Esther. Rescheduling the interview took months. During this time, the youngest child, Florence, went missing. She did not accompany her siblings to the United States to be reunited with their mother and is presumed kidnapped or dead. When the remaining four children received a new interview, their visas were approved—nearly two years after Esther filed the petition (Haile, 2015).

Discussion Questions

1. Imagine you and your family were suddenly unsafe in the United States and feared for your life. What would you do? If you would leave the country, where would you go? How would you get there? How would you provide for your family in the meantime? How do you think you would be received there?
2. Why should a country receive refugee families?

3. What helps refugee families' well-being during relocation? Consider especially what would provide stability and nurturance for children.
4. Where did Ester run into problems with the resettlement process?
5. Are there policy recommendations you could make for this kind of scenario?

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CHAPTER 5: ROUTINES, TRADITIONS, AND CULTURE

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the benefits that families derive from creating and maintaining routines and traditions.
2. Distinguish between routine, traditions, and rituals.
3. Identify rituals related to four major life transitions.
4. Recognize how routines, traditions, and rituals in familial practices contribute to the production and maintenance of culture.
5. Examine cultural identities from a theoretical perspective.
6. Describe the importance of belonging and how anchoring practices can contribute to creating a sense of community and belonging.
7. Recognize how communities can practice cultural persistence as resistance to assimilationist policies.
8. Relate routines, traditions, and rituals to your own or your family's observations and experiences.

5.1: Chapter Reading Guide

5.2: Routines, Predictability, and Families

5.3: Traditions and Rituals

5.4: Culture and Families

5.5: Cultural Identities

5.6: Looking Ahead- Biculturalism

5.7: Going Deeper

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5.1: Chapter Reading Guide

Monica Olvera and Elizabeth B. Pearce

Now, you are ready to dive into some of the specifics of family life: the routines, rituals, and traditions that all families have. In your family experiences or observations, have you been a part of any ritual or tradition related to birth, entry into adulthood, marriage, or death? Perhaps your family has a custom related to another important life event. You will look at culture and how it can be created within a family, as well as the ways that culture influences families. This chapter reinforces and gives specific examples related to the concepts in Chapter 3, which discusses community connections and belonging.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Acculturation:** the process of adapting to a new culture.
- **Anchoring practices:** the behaviors, efforts, and actions people carry out to seek, create, and maintain a sense of community and rootedness.
- **Assimilation strategy:** an acculturation strategy consisting of pursuing and adopting the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the new society or dominant culture.
- **Biculturalism:** when a person has been exposed to and has internalized elements from two or more cultures.
- **Culture:** the shared meanings and shared experiences passed down over time by individuals in a group, such as beliefs, values, symbols, means of communication, religion, logics, rituals, fashions, etiquette, foods, and art that unite a particular society.
- **Cultural erasure:** the practice of a dominant or hegemonic culture actively or passively contributing to the erasure or disappearing of a non-dominant or minoritized culture.
- **Ethnic group:** a subgroup of a population with a set of shared social, cultural, and historical experiences; relatively distinctive beliefs, values, and behaviors; and some sense of identity of belonging to the subgroup.
- **Ethnic identity:** a sense of self that is derived from a sense of belonging to a group, a culture, and a particular setting.
- **Ethnicity:** the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences stemming from common national, ancestral, or regional backgrounds that make subgroups of a population different from one another.
- **Family ritual:** behaviors with symbolic meanings that can be clearly described and serve to organize and affirm central family ideas.
- **Family routine:** the predictable, repeated, consistent patterns that characterize everyday home life.
- **Heritage cultural orientation:** the extent to which individuals are involved with their heritage, ethnic, or nondominant culture.
- **Integration strategy:** an acculturation strategy utilized by those who wish to maintain one's original culture as a member of an ethnocultural group while also participating as an integral member of the larger social network.
- **Marginalization strategy:** an acculturation strategy where a person neither seeks relationships with aspects of the host culture nor maintains their heritage, culture, and identity.
- **Pan-ethnicity:** the grouping together of multiple ethnicities and nationalities under a single label.
- **Rite of passage:** a ritual or celebration that marks the passage when a person leaves one status, role, set of conditions, or group to enter another.
- **Separation strategy:** an acculturation strategy where a person places a high value on maintaining the integrity of their original cultural identity and avoids interaction with those of the new society.

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5.2: Routines, Predictability, and Families

Monica Olvera and Isabelle Havet

Routines, broadly defined, are repeated goal-focused behaviors (Segal, 2004). Your routines may include a mixture of scheduled activities, such as shared mealtimes or a game of pickup basketball on the weekends. The purpose of these routines, other than to get something to eat or enjoy some exercise, is to create predictability and bring together people with different schedules so they can interact and accomplish a task (DeVault, 1994).

Routines and predictability can have positive effects on children, adolescents, and adults. **Family routines** are the predictable, repeated, consistent patterns that characterize everyday home life. As one of the fundamental structures of family life, these routines help to promote the health of the family members (Boyce et al., 1983). Family routines bring us closer together, help us get work done, bring stability to our lives, and manage day-to-day challenges (Harrist et al., 2019).

In Focus: Reading as a Family



Figure 5.1. Wolfie's role in the family shows how routines can be goal focused but also create a sense of fun and predictability for children. Photograph by Isabelle Havet. License: CC BY 4.0.

This is Wolfie, a hand puppet that was gifted to my two-year-old son, Oscar when he was a baby (figure 5.1). It's become part of my family's daily life. Each night, Wolfie (attached to Dad) reads to Oscar. It's a fun way to teach Oscar to read (while keeping him interested enough not to run away). But it's also become an object around which we gather, learn, and play. Oscar thinks it's so fun when Wolfie reads with him, and he likes Mom and Dad to join in the fun, too!

Children

It may seem obvious to you that routines bring people together and create stability. You may have felt this firsthand growing up with routines that brought comfort and security, like reading bedtime stories with a favorite stuffed animal.

One way to understand the nature of contemporary families beyond your personal experience is to analyze patterns of social behavior. Recent research shows how routines affect outcomes for children:

- Routines in the home, such as bedtime routines and homework sessions, can have positive effects on children's mental health, physical health, academic achievement, and delinquent behavior (Manczak, Williams, & Chen, 2017; Brody & Flor, 1997; Hare et al., 2008).
- Family routines can give children a sense of stability and security, in turn potentially decreasing anxiety (Dacey, Mack, &

Fiore, 2016).
- Positive child adjustment across the transition to kindergarten can be facilitated by family routines (Ferretti & Bub, 2017).
- Home routines can be especially helpful for children from low-socioeconomic-status households in countering some of the elevated risk for experiencing chaotic and unpredictable family environments (Evans et al., 2005).

Adolescents

The benefits and positive developmental effects of routines for children are similar to those experienced during adolescence. Studies show how routines affect outcomes for adolescents:

- Adolescents who regularly share mealtimes with their parents are less susceptible to experiencing depression, get better grades, are less likely to smoke cigarettes or marijuana, are less likely to have problematic drinking problems, and have fewer mental health problems (Compan et al., 2002; Eisenberg et al., 2004).
- African American adolescents who experience more family routines have reduced risk of alcohol and epinephrine use, higher emotional self-regulation, and increased likelihood of enrolling in a four-year university (Barton et al., 2018).
- For youth who struggled with mental health, family routines served as a way for the families to feel in control, helped the family members cope and have a sense of purpose, enforced familial cohesion, and reinforced individual and family identity (Koom et al., 2012).

For adolescents, family routines can increase social competence, improve educational outcomes, and contribute to mental health and resilience (Barnes et al., 2007; Evans & Rodger, 2008; Fiese et al., 2002; Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Lanza & Taylor, 2010; Schultz-Krohn, 2004). These family routines might look like a regular movie night or volunteering to pick up trash at a neighborhood park every other month. An adolescent's sense of connectedness with family life can also serve as a protective factor against suicide ideation (Carter et al., 2005). Children and adolescents who participate in shared family activities, such as game nights or attending religious services together, can form a stronger sense of identity and self-confidence (Denham, 1995, 2002, 2003; Evans & Rodger, 2008).

Adults

Life as an adult can sometimes feel chaotic and overwhelming. With work, caretaking, social, and academic demands, it can be challenging to create and maintain routines that fit within a busy schedule. Even so, having routines as an adult can be beneficial. Researchers have also shown how routines can be helpful for adults, particularly in the areas of physical, emotional, relational, and financial well-being.

Routines in adulthood can be ones that a person establishes for themselves or ones that are shared with housemates, family members, or friends. Routines in a family environment can be helpful for a person's health. For example, a couple might make a habit of going for a daily stroll around the block or cooking a healthy meal together. People trying to implement health behaviors, such as discontinuing the use of tobacco products, can find benefits in routines (Wagner et al., 2004). A family might have a routine of getting dental and medical checkups on birthdays or at the beginning of each year, which could help prevent medical and dental issues (Rosse al., 1990).

Routines can also be beneficial for an adult's emotional and relational well-being. For individuals, day-to-day routines, such as a 10-minute meditation each morning, can enhance a person's sense of contentment and life satisfaction (Heintzelman & King, 2019). Adults who share routines with friends and family are likely to feel supported, and the practice can strengthen relationships. For example, families that have regular check-ins can support and encourage each other, which can help increase a sense of closeness (Franko et al., 2008). Romantic partners can enhance their sense of connectedness and emotional intimacy by setting aside "date nights" or time to regularly enjoy each other's company (Wilcox & Dew, 2012).

Routines can also be helpful for one's financial well-being while at the same time being helpful for relationships. Adults who live with roommates and have weekly or monthly budget check-ins have been found to have better success meeting financial goals. The roommates can encourage and support each other in their goals, as well as discuss financial issues to prevent conflict that could come from economic stress (Dew, 2008).

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

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5.3: Traditions and Rituals

Monica Olvera

In the previous section, we examined the implications of family routines for family well-being. In this section, we will discuss the differences between routines and rituals, the importance of rituals and traditions for families, and examples that describe important life events and transitions.

What are the differences between routines and rituals? When families attribute significance and meaning to routines, especially those that promote family cohesion and family identity, routines can become rituals. As previously discussed, family routines are the predictable, repeated, consistent patterns that characterize daily home life. In contrast, **family rituals** are "compelling...behaviors with symbolic meanings that can be clearly described and serve to organize and affirm central family ideas" (Steinglass et al., 1987, as cited in Denham, 2003).

Figure 5.2 provides a comparison of family rituals and family routines. Family routines and rituals overlap in many ways with respect to their meanings, associations, ways they are initiated, and meaning. Routines tend to be tied to everyday life and may not hold special meaning, whereas rituals tend to be carried out in association with extraordinary events and often have symbolic significance.

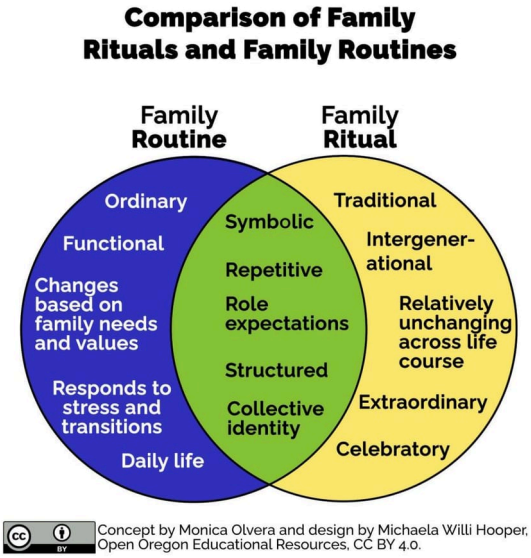


Figure 5.2. This Venn diagram compares family rituals and family routines. For more detail about the elements in family routines and family rituals, consult Appendix B. Image description. "Comparison of Family Rituals and Family Routines" by Monica Olvera and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0.

Routines and rituals build a sense of belonging, family cohesion, and family identity. While family routines can be supportive for families, they can be disruptive if they are too rigid or chaotic, require too much time or energy, lead to conflicts among family members, or contribute to family members resenting each other (Fiese, 2007). Figure 5.3 provides a summary of the supportive and disruptive elements of family routines and rituals.

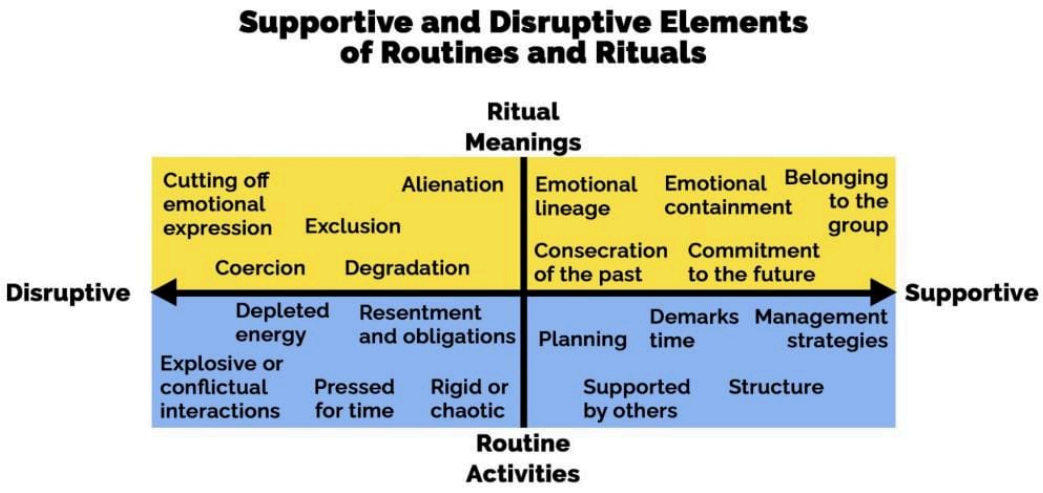


Figure 5.3. This chart explores supportive and disruptive elements of routines and rituals (adapted from Fiese, 2006). Image description. "Supportive and Disruptive Elements of Routines and Rituals" based on text from *Family Routines and Rituals* by Barbara Fiese. License: Fair Use.

Family routines can become rituals when symbolic meaning is attached to the activity. Ritual meanings can become disruptive to families, however, if family members feel alienated or excluded, if they are cut off from emotional expression during the ritual, or if they feel coerced at any point during the ritual (Fiese, 2007). A disruption of family rituals can erode group cohesion for the family. A regular disruption of routines can be harmful because it contributes to an accumulation of stress beyond what the family can handle (Harrist et al., 2019).

Rituals Related to Life Transitions

Many cultures and societies practice rites of passage. A **rite of passage** can be a ritual or celebration that marks the passage when a person leaves one status, role, set of conditions, or group to enter another. Rituals and celebrations that mark a rite of passage are typically performed within a community setting and are community-created and community-directed. The rite can be a public affirmation of shared values and beliefs, such as a marriage ceremony, or it can promote community identity and cohesion, such as a powwow. Rites of passage can guide a person's transition into a new role, status, or phase, as seen in a commencement ceremony to mark a person's graduation from high school. Anthropological records show that humans have practiced rites of passage for thousands of years, in many different forms, and across all cultures.

Now we will describe four life transitions that are common for human experiences in the United States. The examples described below represent a minuscule fraction of the ways in which individuals, families, and communities practice rites of passage.

Birth/Family Formation

Birth is the beginning of a new life, and, therefore, a unique life event and rituals can be a key part of marking and celebrating such an event (Wojtkowiak, 2020). Similar to other life passages (such as adulthood, marriage, or death), considering birth as a social transition means that the pre-status or social order is temporally in a space of transition and a status of being in between two spaces or statuses. Parents-to-be are preparing mentally, materially, or even spiritually for the coming of their child and the transition into becoming parents. Family members and friends are searching for new roles in the life of this new human being. Experiencing the birth of a baby can bring feelings of happiness and joy, as well as ambiguity and uncertainty. The coming of a new member of society has been traditionally marked by rituals. Birth is, therefore, understood as the first rite of passage in a human life (Van Gennep, 1960).

Rituals and ceremonies performed around the time of birth serve as celebrations to mark the occasion. Rituals can also help parents transition into new roles, as well as establish relationships of care, support, and responsibility within a community of friends and family. In this section, we will look at examples of "blessingway" ceremonies, and secular naming ceremonies.

"Blessingway" ceremonies, or "mother's blessing," is inspired by the traditional Navajo blessingway ceremony (Biddle, 1996). Traditional blessingway ceremonies consist of singing, chanting, and sharing stories to wish beauty, good, and harmony to the mother-to-be. The songs and stories are shared during pregnancy and childbirth. The singer, who is a traditional medicine man, performs the songs. The songs and stories are important for the mother-to-be and shape her view of childbirth and family life. Through the chants, the woman is spiritually connected to her ancestors and the past and future (Biddle, 1996). A modern mother's blessing is described as a "celebration of a woman's transition into motherhood that's rooted in Navajo culture. It is a spiritual gathering of the woman's closest friends and family who come to nurture the mama-to-be with wise words, positivity, art, and pampering." (Your guide to throwing a virtual blessingway, baby shower & gender reveal, 2020). During a mother's blessing, the mother is blessed by other significant women before the baby is born. Most of the time, the other participants are her mother and mother-in-law, sisters, aunts, and friends. However, variations are possible, and sometimes men are also present.

Naming or welcoming ceremonies for babies, inspired by traditional baptism (which typically involves water sprinkling or immersion, and religion), is a reinvented way of welcoming the baby into one's community. It is practiced as an alternative to religious baptism. The motivation for a baby-naming ceremony is for parents or caregivers to have a ceremony that brings together friends and family to celebrate one of life's key milestones. Naming ceremonies are ideal for families who want to mark the occasion in a way that isn't religious. A naming ceremony is personalized and uniquely created for each family and can last between 20 to 60 minutes. Parents and other significant others can, for instance, state their hopes and wishes for the baby. "Wishes for a Child" by Joanna Miller is an example of a poem for a naming ceremony, and it appears here with other poems. Music and readings can also be part of the ceremony. Some physical symbols might be given to the baby, such as a token for guidance or something that the child can open or read later in their life. "Guideparents" might be presented to the community, and they can express their wishes to the baby. As this ritual is individually crafted for each family, the location, length, content, and other ritual elements are chosen for the occasion.

Entry into Adulthood

Coming-of-age rituals are the ceremonies or traditions that mark the leaving behind of childhood or adolescence and the entry into adulthood, maturity, or increased level of responsibility and duties. Many times a coming-of-age ritual is rooted in religious tradition, such as Bar and Bat Mitzvahs in Judaism or the Sacrament of Confirmation in Catholicism. Secular coming-of-age practices can include getting one's driver's license, débutante balls, high school senior prom, and graduation, or a quinceanera, as pictured in figure 5.4.

In Focus: La Quinceañera: A Rite of Passage among Latina Adolescents

"Hurry, *mamá*!" Laura begged her mom. "*¡Ayúdame a quitar la falda! ¡Ya va a empezar el baile sorpresa* and I'm not even wearing my *folklórico* dress yet!" which translates into English as "Help me take off this skirt! The surprise dance is about to start!" Laura was hurriedly trying to unlace the glittery, bedazzled gown to put on her Jalisco dress to dance to "El Son de la Negra" with her *corte de chambelanes y damas*, her court of young men and women who would accompany her. Amy, Laura's mom, clumsily helped Laura unlace the bodice of the dress, then helped Laura step into her Jalisco dress, careful not to get any of Laura's curls stuck in the zipper. The scene felt like a fiasco because the guests were waiting to see the *baile sorpresa*. It was Laura's quinceañera, the elaborate party and celebration of Laura turning 15 a few months ago, a ritual that many other Latina girls her age had gone through or were already planning for their birthdays. Laura had practiced the dance for months with her court members, and it was almost the moment to debut the choreographed and stylized dance for the party guests, a mixture of Laura's extended family members, friends, Amy's coworkers, and even guests that had flown to Chicago for the big event.



Figure 5.4. A group of teenage girls gather for an outdoor quinceanera in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Quinceaneras occur all over the U.S. "Quinceañera. Santa Fe" by Christopher Michel. License: CC BY 2.0.

Finally, Amy finished helping Laura secure her skirt and clasp her shoes, and with a *whoosh*, the pair of them rushed out to the reception hall. Laura took her place on the dance floor by the *chambelan de honor*, the male escort of honor, and turned her head to catch the DJ's eye. The DJ saw Laura in position to begin the dance with the court, queued up the music, and belted out a command to the guests, *"Damas y caballeros, un fuerte el aplauso para Laura y los chambelanes. pon la música!"* which translates in English to "Ladies and gentlemen, give a big round of applause for Laura and her court! DJ, play the music!"

As the music started and Laura's court of friends and cousins began to dance, Amy released a huge sigh of relief. This momentous occasion, which the family had saved for over the years and which had taken almost a year of planning, was finally coming to fruition. Laura and her parents, family, friends, and community were celebrating this important coming-of-age ritual, cementing the family's sense of cohesion and identity and Laura's symbolic rite of passage into a performance of womanhood.



Figure 5.5. Some quinceañeras, like the two pictured here, include a Catholic mass. "Quinceañera" by Thank You. License: CC BY 2.0.

The quinceañera, a rite of passage that marks the 15th birthday of Latina girls, is practiced by Latinos of various backgrounds and nationalities throughout the United States and Latin America. (The term "quinceañera" refers both to the ritual and to the girl celebrating her 15th birthday.) While it has many variations, quinceañeras were typically practiced by elite families in Mexico. The tradition has been transported to and transformed within the United States. The previous vignette describes the quinceañera, Laura, preparing for the surprise dance portion of the quinceañera, a ritual within a ritual.

From a parent's point of view, watching a youth grow into maturity and take on the roles, responsibilities, and risks of adulthood can be both exciting and frightening, as the parent struggles with letting their child have more autonomy while also fearing for their child's well-being and safety. In this TED Talk, Marc Bamuthi Joseph shares a Black father's tender and wrenching internal reflection on the pride and terror of seeing his son enter adulthood.

Marriage/Union Formation

Chapter 3 describes different types of unions, partnerships, and relationships, with a specific focus on marriage, that have a range of legal, religious, or community acceptance. In this section, we present a few examples of marriage and union formation rituals practiced by families in the United States. Union formations have been practiced by cultures and societies around the world for millennia. The video "The History of Marriage" provides a succinct introduction to marriage practices around the world, such as polygamy, a marriage form permitting more than one spouse at the same time.

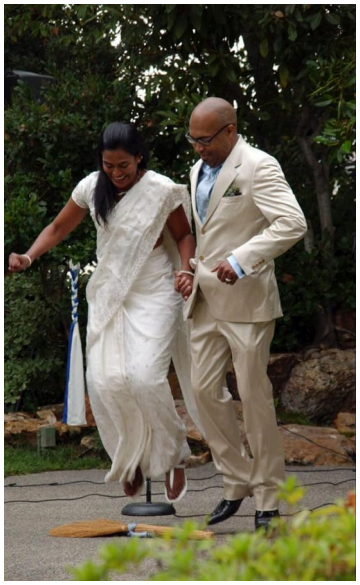


Figure 5.6. This newly married couple is "jumping the broom," an African American marriage tradition. "Jumping the Broom at a Los Angeles Wedding in September 2011" by Hipstamatic Shots from Lisa & Lorna. License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

"Jumping the broom" is a marriage tradition that some African American couples practice (figure 5.6). The tradition was mainly practiced by enslaved couples, who did not have access to the legal right of marriage due to the rampant racial discrimination that existed in the institution of chattel slavery. A couple would publicly proclaim their commitment and devotion to each other, sometimes with a priest/minister or the enslaver officiating the ceremony.

Variations of the practice could involve the couple jumping over a broom placed sideways or jumping over two brooms. The broom could be held up or placed on the ground, and the couple could jump or step over the broom at the same time or one person at a time (Dundes, 1996).

The ritual was typically regarded as a binding agreement for the couple, potentially to the extent that it was legally recognized.

While the origin of the practice is unclear, some scholars suggest brooms were symbolic in wedding rituals in Africa and thus were incorporated into wedding traditions of enslaved people in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries (Dundes, 1996). Other researchers suggest the practice originated in the British Isles (Parry, 2020).

In contemporary weddings, couples may choose to incorporate jumping the broom into their wedding ceremony. This practice could typically occur toward the end of a wedding ceremony, when the couple has exchanged their vows in front of a room filled with friends, family, and loved ones, as the last step in culminating the wedding ceremony. A broom would be placed on the ground in front of the couple, facing the guests, and a speaker would describe the origins of the practice and what the practice symbolizes for the new couple.

For example, in this video excerpt of a couple's ceremony, we can see a couple standing in front of the broom while the officiate speaks to the guests:

> We now end this ceremony with the African tradition of jumping the broom. Slaves in this country were not permitted to marry, so they jumped the broom as a way to [demonstrate] unity. Today it represents great joy and at the same time serves as a reminder of the past and the pain of slavery. As our bride and groom jump the broom, they physically and spiritually cross the threshold of the path of matrimony…in making their home together. It represents the sweeping away of the old and welcoming the new. The sweeping away of negative energy, making the way for all things good to come into their lives. It is also a call of support for the marriage from the entire community of family and friends. The bride and groom will now begin their new lives together with a clean sweep.

Then, the speaker asks the guests to stand and count to three, upon which the couple hops over the broom together while the guests erupt into cheers and applause.

Death and Bereavement

Death and bereavement, or mourning the passing of a loved one, are recognized in a variety of ways, depending on the family's own traditions and culture. The passing of a loved one can be a time of great sadness but also of joy in celebrating a person's life and legacy. Rituals can provide opportunities for friends and family to mourn the passing of a loved one and to gather and comfort one another. In this section, we will look at the example of bereavement practices among Asian Indian American Hindus (AIAHs) residing in the southern region of the United States.

Beliefs about the end of life and the meaning of death as a transition to another life can help people feel less anxiety about death (Chopra, 2006). Ethnicity can provide a cultural system to make sense of the world, including suffering and loss (Gupta, 2011). AIAHs interviewed by Dr. Rashmi Gupta (2011) accessed their cultural and religious beliefs to help them make sense of death and loss, as well as provide comfort in mourning practices. In focus groups Gupta conducted with AIAHs, individuals discussed their traditional beliefs and practices and described how death and bereavement are approached in India as opposed to the United States. AIAHs strive to adhere to their religious and cultural practices as much as possible within the resources available to them in the United States. Gupta (2011) noted that the death rituals and customs followed include "delivering a eulogy, embalming at Hindu funerals, a 1- to 2-day mourning period instead of 13 days, donation of the body to science instead of cremation, and allowing the funeral home to perform the cleansing of the deceased instead of the son" (p. 257).

Despite the majority of Hindus in India believing that life-prolonging means interfere with the cycle of life and death, in the United States, some Hindus have utilized artificial means to prolong life, such as a respirator. Some Hindus in the United States follow pre- and post-death rituals, whereas others do not. In India, widows are expected to wear white saris and refrain from wearing makeup or jewelry for the remainder of their lives as a sign of mourning. However, in the United States and India, this custom is changing, with widows in the United States wearing colors that do not prevent them from blending into the workforce (Gupta, 2011).

The variation in adherence to practices may vary according to the degree of one's acculturation, place of birth, religious orientation, and availability of priests and temples. The AIAH seniors Gupta interviewed stated that they were not afraid of death, but they were concerned about getting very sick and becoming a burden for their adult children. They were not too concerned, however, about their adult children's ability to carry out rituals and customs that the seniors had performed for their own parents in India, as the adult children would follow the guidance and recommendations of the priest at their respective places or religious gatherings (Gupta, 2011).

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
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Your guide to throwing a virtual blessingway, baby shower & gender reveal. (2020, April 29). MiLOWE. www.milowekids.com/the-mag/y...-gender-reveal

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5.4: Culture and Families

As discussed in Chapter 2, **culture**, broadly defined, is the set of beliefs, values, symbols, means of communication, religion, logics, rituals, fashions, etiquette, foods, and art that unite a particular society. Cultural elements are learned behaviors; children learn them while growing up in a particular culture as older members teach them how to live. As such, culture is passed down from one generation to the next.

Culture is intertwined with both ethnicity, religion, and spirituality. **Ethnicity** refers to the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences stemming from common national, ancestral, or regional backgrounds that make subgroups of a population different from one another. Similarly, an **ethnic group** is a subgroup of a population with a set of shared social, cultural, and historical experiences; relatively distinctive beliefs, values, and behaviors and some sense of identity or belonging to the subgroup. **Pan-ethnicity** is the grouping together of multiple ethnicities and nationalities under a single label. For example, people in the United States with Vietnamese, Cambodian, Japanese, and Korean backgrounds could be grouped together under the pan-ethnic label Asian American. The United States has five pan-ethnic groups, including Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, and Latinos. The grouping together of multiple ethnicities or nationalities under one umbrella term can be helpful, but it can also be problematic—these groups may share geography, but they have differing values, beliefs, and rituals.

In addition to ethnicity, other terms are used to refer to this aspect of cultures, such as majority and minoritized or marginalized cultures, dominant and nondominant cultures, or macro- and microcultures. Some groups relate to social identities based on regions (the South, the East Coast, urban, rural) or affiliation (street gangs, NASCAR fans, college students). Such groups are not necessarily distinct cultures but rather groups of people who share concerns and who might perceive similarities due to common interests or characteristics (Lustig & Koester, 2010).

Religion is a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and worldviews that relate humanity to spirituality and, sometimes, to moral values. Many religions have narratives, symbols, traditions, and sacred histories that are intended to give meaning to life or to explain the origin of life or the universe. People may affiliate with religions, beliefs, or a general sense of spirituality.

In Focus: What Brings Us Together

My whole family has such a close relationship and tight bond because we do a lot as a group, including working together. I would say that our religion and culture do play a big role in this.



Figure 5.7. Both food and religion can bring a sense of belonging to a family's culture. "Photo" by Jeswin Thomas on unsplash.com. License: Unsplash License.

In our culture, food is a big thing, and we always work together to cook for the family. We are also always willing to help one

another whenever one needs a hand, and that's where religion comes in. Being Catholic, we are just always taught to be nice and respectful toward everyone, especially your family.

Families maintain traditions, rituals, and routines that are heavily influenced by the cultural spaces that any kinship group occupies. But families are also made up of individuals, and while a kinship group may share a culture, individuals may embrace different cultures, ethnic identities, and religious or spiritual beliefs, which creates complexities in family life.

For example, for immigrant and refugee families in the United States, religiosity can be a protective factor when adapting to another culture. Religiosity and spirituality, often integrated with one's ethnic identity, rituals, and traditions, appear to play a significant role as protective factors in the immigrant paradox among Latino and Somali youth (Areba, 2015; Ruiz & Steffen, 2011). What happens when individuals within a family have differing beliefs? People who grew up in families where parents had different religions from one another report less overall religiosity (McPhail, 2019). Children may grow up with differing religious or spiritual beliefs from those of their parents. Especially in the case of children who identify as LGBTQIA+ within a family whose religious or moral beliefs negate these identities, children can experience dissonance and a lack of connection within their family.

Belonging

While there are many definitions and conceptualizations of belonging, one definition is when a person experiences a subjective feeling that they are an integral part of their surrounding systems, including their friends, family, school and work environments, communities, cultural groups, and physical places (Hagerty et al., 1992). The need for belonging, "to connect deeply with other people and secure places, to align with one's cultural and subcultural identities, and to feel like one is a part of the systems around them," is a very basic human need (Allen et al., 2021). Connection with others, physical safety, and well-being are inextricably linked and are crucial for survival (Boyd & Richardson, 2009). A greater sense of belonging is associated with positive psychosocial outcomes.

The benefits and potential protective factors derived from a sense of belonging are especially potent for individuals who identify with marginalized or minoritized groups, including people who identify as sexually or gender diverse, people with disabilities, or those who experience mental health issues (Gardner et al., 2019; Harrist & Bradley, 2002; Rainey et al., 2018; Spencer et al., 2016; Steger & Kashdan, 2009). Among college students from minoritized communities, social belonging interventions are associated with positive impacts on academic and health outcomes (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Other positive effects include having a healthy sense of belonging, including more positive social relationships, academic achievement, occupational success, and better physical and mental health (Allen et al., 2018; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Hagerty et al., 1992).

In contrast to the benefits of feeling a sense of belonging, a lack of belonging has been linked to an increased risk for mental and physical health problems (Cacioppo et al., 2015). The health risks associated with social isolation can be the equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day and are twice as harmful as obesity (Ho /#term_887_246">mental illness, lowered immune functioning, antisocial behavior, physical illness, and early mortality (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2003; Cacioppo et al., 2011; Choenarom et al., 2005; Cornwell & Waite, 2009; Hawkley & Capitanio, 2015; Holt-Lunstad, 2018; Leary, 1990; Slavich et al., 2010; O'Donovan et al., 2010).

Belonging can be fostered at the individual and social level. Figure 5.8 provides a framework for understanding and fostering belonging. A sense of belonging can be impacted by one's competencies, opportunities, perceptions, and motivations (Allen et al., 2021).

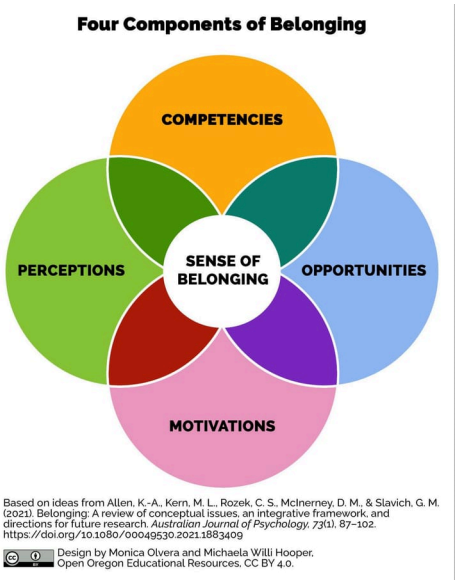


Figure 5.8. This graphic shows an integrated framework for understanding, assessing, and fostering belonging (adapted from Allen et al., 2021). Image description. "Four Components of Belonging" designed by Monica Olvera and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on ideas from "Belonging: A Review of Conceptual Issues, an Integrative Framework, and Directions for Future Research" by K.-A. Allen, M. L. Kern, C. S. Rozek, D. M. McInerney, & G. M. Slavich in *Australian Journal of Psychology*.

Competency refers to having a set of skills and abilities that are needed to connect and relate to others, develop a sense of identity, and ensure one's behavior aligns with social norms and cultural values.

Opportunities to belong come from the availability of groups, people, places, times, and spaces to connect with others in ways that allow belonging to occur. Individuals from isolated or rural areas, first- and second-generation immigrants, and refugees may experience circumstances that limit opportunities to foster belonging. The lack of opportunities for belonging was sharply felt during the COVID-19 pandemic when shelter-in-place orders and social distancing measures limited human interactions. But despite opportunities to connect in person, technologies such as gaming and social media quickly became more favored opportunities for connection, especially for youth, those who are shy, or people who experience social anxiety (Allen et al., 2014; Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2002; Davis, 2012; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Seabrook et al., 2016; Seidman, 2013).

Motivations to belong consist of the need or desire to connect with others or the fundamental need to feel accepted, belong, and seek social interactions and connections (Leary & Kelly, 2009).

Individuals have varying perceptions of belonging within their kinship groups and within chosen or assigned cultures. Perceptions of belonging are related to one's subjective feelings and cognitions regarding their experiences and are informed by past experiences. A person's negative perceptions of self or others, stereotypes, and negative experiences, such as feeling left out, can affect the desire to connect with others.

Cultural Erasure and Cultural Persistence

Cultural erasure is the practice of a dominant culture contributing to the erasure of a non-dominant or minoritized culture. An example of active cultural erasure would be that of Native American children being forced to attend residential boarding schools, where they might be punished for speaking their heritage language, forced to wear uniforms that were stripped of makers of their community and identity, and harshly mistreated, even to the point of starvation or being beaten (figure 5.9). The strategy of not allowing the children to speak their communities' languages or learn and practice their communities' traditions and rituals was an active cultural erasure. Passive cultural erasure could include the histories of communities not being included in historical textbooks or the passing of laws that prohibit people from wearing jewelry, hairstyles, clothing, or other items that are indicators of one's cultural identity.



Figure 5.9. The photographs here show “before” and “after” portraits of a student at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, a residential boarding school built on the idea that education should “kill the Indian in him and save the man.” “Tom Torlino – Navajo” by Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center. License: CC BY-NC-SA.

Cultural persistence, then, is the very opposite of cultural erasure. Cultural persistence is when elements of culture (such as language, rituals, foodways, and traditions) persist despite efforts to blot out those cultural practices and identities. Among Black Caribbean immigrants, gatherings of family and friends called “liming” sessions reinforce family and cultural identities through storytelling (Brooks, 2013). Another example of cultural persistence is that of language revitalization programs among Indigenous communities, such as the Chinuk Wawa language program supported by Lane Community College (LCC) in Eugene, Oregon. This program consists of a collaboration between Lane Community College, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Northwest Indian Language Institute of the University of Oregon (UO). This program, which has operated for nearly a decade, provides language classes for tribal members, LCC and UO students, and members of the Grand Ronde Community.

Comprehension Self Check

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5.5: Cultural Identities

Monica Olvera

There are many aspects to our identities, such as our family histories, religious affiliation, and nationality. A major component of our identities can be our ethnicity and cultural heritage. In this section, we will consider various aspects of ethnic identity and how it can change over time.

Positive Ethnic Identity Model

Researcher Jean S. Phinney defines **ethnic identity** as a sense of self that is derived from a sense of belonging to a group, a culture, and a particular setting. Aspects of ethnic identity can also include a person's knowledge of an ethnic group they identify with and how valuable or significant it is to be a member of an ethnic group (Tajfel, 1981). Ethnic identity is a multidimensional construct that can change over time and context (Phinney, 2003). Ethnic identity can be developed and reinforced by engaging in activities associated with one's culture or ethnic group, such as associating with members of one's group or speaking a shared language. But ethnic identity can also exist as an internal structure, independent of such behaviors (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Components of ethnic identity also include in-group attitudes toward one's own ethnic group, as well as toward other groups:

- **Positive ethnic identity:** a positive self-attitude derived from a sense of belonging to groups that are meaningful to a person (Phinney, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
- **Intragroup affinity:** a positive or affirming sense of one's own ethnic identity that creates a sense of pride in one's ethnic identity. Possessing intragroup affinity has been linked to reduced depressive symptoms among youth from minoritized communities (Smith & Silva, 2011) and is associated with positive outcomes.
- **Intergroup affinity:** positive attitudes toward ethnic groups other than a group where an individual has ascribed membership. Intergroup affinity has been linked to the reduction of intergroup conflict among youth from minoritized ethnic groups (Phinney & Ferguson, 1997).

Acculturation Model

Our lives are increasingly defined by technology and globalization, which allows us to interact with people on the other side of the world, as well as learn about and internalize components of many cultures. When individuals and families are exposed to new cultures, they go through a process of **acculturation** or adapting to a new culture (Berry, 2003). Figure 5.10 shows a model of acculturation proposed by John Berry (1980), who anticipated that acculturating individuals face two issues: 1) the **dominant culture orientation** or the extent to which acculturating individuals are involved with the receiving or host culture, and 2) the **heritage cultural orientation**, or the extent to which individuals are involved with their heritage, ethnic, or nondominant culture (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

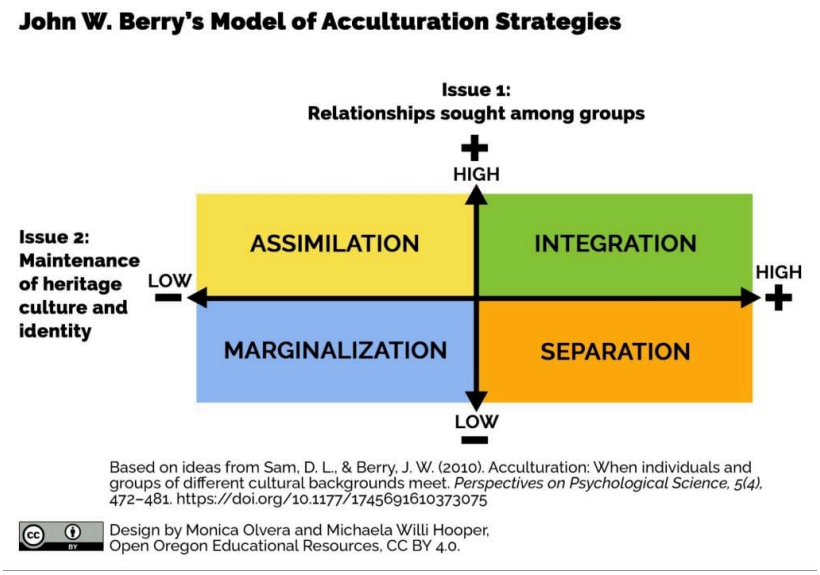


Figure 5.10. This chart shows John W. Berry's model of acculturation strategies. Image description. "John W. Berry's Model of Acculturation Strategies" designed by Monica Olvera and Michaela Willi Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on ideas from "Acculturation: When Individuals and Groups of Different Cultural Backgrounds Meet" by D. L. Sam and J. W. Berry in *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

One helpful framework for understanding acculturation is a model developed by psychologist John W. Berry. His model examines four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 2003).

Assimilation strategy is utilized when an individual does not seek to maintain their cultural identity and instead pursues close interaction with other cultures. The person may adopt the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the new society.

Integration strategy is utilized by those who wish to maintain one's original culture as a member of an ethnocultural group. At the same time, they may also participate as a member of the dominant society. In this way, the person both maintains aspects of their original culture while also incorporating aspects of a newer culture into their cultural knowledge and practices. This strategy has been found to be the most adaptive, and it is linked to better psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Liebkind, 2001; Sam et al., 2008).

The **separation strategy** is chosen by those who place a high value on maintaining the integrity of their original cultural identity and avoid interaction with those of the new society. The **marginalization strategy** consists of placing a low value on cultural maintenance and also avoiding interactions with those of the new society, sometimes due to experiences of exclusion or discrimination. This strategy has been found to be the least adaptive.

A person may utilize different strategies depending on context and circumstances, as the strategies are not static. The attitudes of the larger society toward immigrants and the types of settlement policies the larger society places on acculturating groups can influence which strategy is adopted. Generally, integration is the preferred strategy for optimal outcomes, whereas marginalization is the least preferred strategy (Berry, 2003).

With respect to policies applied to immigrant communities in the United States, assimilation has been a multidimensional process of boundary brokering and reduction in which ethnic distinctions and the social and cultural differences and identities associated with them are purposefully blurred or dissolved (Alba & Nee, 2009).

At the group level, "assimilation may involve the absorption of one or more minority groups into the mainstream," whereas at the individual level, "assimilation denotes the cumulative changes that make individuals of one ethnic group more acculturated, integrated, and identified with the members of another" (Rumbaut, 2015, p. 2). This approach has been used to justify selective, state-imposed policies and practices with the goal of eradicating minoritized cultures and achieving the "benevolent" conquest of other peoples. One striking example is the effort to Americanize, Christianize, and "civilize" Native American children by forcibly removing them from their families and sending them to residential schools, such as the Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon. Around 270 children died while in custody at the Chemawa Indian School between 1880 and 1945 (Pember, 2021).

In environments that tend toward assimilation, cultural maintenance in ethnic minorities can lead to lower levels of life satisfaction (Kus-Harbord & Ward, 2015). In contrast, policies and practices that allow individuals, families, and groups to create

communities of belonging and practice their heritage cultures can promote equity.

Creating Communities of Belonging

Whether a person is a student who moved to a new area to attend college in a community they are unfamiliar with or a person who immigrated to a host country and has yet to get to know the new receiving community—people tend to seek or create community by utilizing anchoring practices. Like an anchor of a boat, meant to keep a boat in a specific place and not be moved by tides, currents, or winds, **anchoring practices** are the behaviors, efforts, and actions people carry out to seek, create, and maintain a sense of community and rootedness.

When a person, a family, or a group of people move to a new community, there is a human need to create a sense of belonging while experiencing challenges like isolation and loneliness (Campbell, 2008; Narchal, 2012). Families can make use of existing social networks to tap into community groups, or they may have to create entirely new spaces. For example, Somali refugee families in Boston utilized existing religious organizations, family support, and community organizations to tap into existing communities, thus benefiting from peer and family support, religious faith, and social support networks to make new lives for themselves (Betancourt et al., 2014). Connections with family members help immigrants and refugees retain a sense of identity within their culture and family (Lim, 2009). Newly arrived people may connect with family members or friends who are already settled in a community, religious organizations (e.g., mosques or churches), schools, cultural or community centers, and nonprofit organizations aimed at helping immigrant and refugee families (e.g., the Center for African Immigrants and Refugees Organization [CAIRO]).

Anchoring practices could include forming community spaces when those spaces do not already exist. For example, in Corvallis, Oregon, a small group of Mexican immigrant families got together to form a folkloric Mexican dance group so that the children's positive cultural identity could be encouraged and parents could mutually support each other. These kinds of activities occur around the U.S., as pictured in figure 5.11.



Figure 5.11. These children participate in Latino Fest in Lorain, Ohio. "Alma de Mexico dancers at Latino Fest today in Lorain" by Rona Proudfoot on flickr.com.&*nbs*License: CC BY-SA 2.0

The ways immigrant and refugee individuals, families, and communities seek, create, and maintain support vary widely. They may draw on family and community resilience to find ways to continue to survive and, in many cases, thrive.

If you'd like to explore more deeply the ways that families with intersectional identities create stability, structure, and belonging, watch a ten-minute video and complete this activity in the "Going Deeper" section.

Cultural Resistance and Persistence

We opened this section with brief definitions and examples of cultural erasure and cultural persistence. Here, we will focus more

deeply on the ways that communities of belonging work to resist erasure and persist in keeping cultures alive.

Throughout U.S. history, among the many horrific ways Native Americans were treated, one strategy to delegitimize their cultures is paper genocide, or state and federal recognition titles used to determine Native Americans' significance, presence, and legacy in U.S. history and society or to refute their identity. There are strict criteria for a tribe to be federally recognized, and it can be difficult for some Indigenous communities to "obtain enough tangible, historic resources to prove their ancestry or community" (Nguyễn & Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation, 2020, p. 5).

The Eastern Pequot Archeology Field School in Connecticut is a clear example of a community outright resisting cultural erasure while building community in a culturally affirming way. As a part of this revival effort, the Eastern Pequot Archaeology Field School provides tangible items from the past that ground the tribal members to their reservation, which has been established for hundreds of years. Items such as arrowheads, musket bullets, and scissors show that the Eastern Pequots' ancestors lived with their European colonizers from the 17th to the 19th centuries, as their Indigenous presence was enough to resist colonization. Over 99,000 artifacts found throughout the 15 Field School seasons dismantle the common misconception of how Native Americans lived during the beginning of the United States' history and redefines modern beliefs about how Indigenous peoples survived European colonization. The Field School transforms the brief binary description of Indigenous history into a more complicated and dynamic story that elaborates on Indigenous struggle, survival, and resistance (Nguyễn & Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation, 2020).

In Focus: Reviving the Hawaiian Language

Here, we will look at the multigenerational efforts to rescue and revive the Hawaiian language, which has been almost entirely eliminated by Hawai'i's colonizers in an attempt at cultural erasure.

Before the arrival of Captain Cook in Hawai'i in 1778, Hawaiians had lived and thrived for centuries in the islands, creating a distinct and rich culture, including a plentiful oral tradition. The Hawaiian language, or *'ōlelo Hawai'i*, embodied a cultural history that linked Hawaiians to their history, cosmology, and worldview. *Kāhuna* (priests) could recite from memory the origin chant, or *Kumulipo*, which contains over 2,000 lines of text (Beckwith, 1972; Mitchell, 1992). Countless *mo'olelo* (stories), *ka'ao* (epic legends), *mele* (songs), and *pule* (prayers) were vehicles for conveying values, teachings, and histories to the people.

In the 1800s, the arrival of American missionaries prompted profound changes on 'ōlelo Hawai'i. Missionaries built schools with the intention of using education to convert Hawaiians to Christianity. Hawaiians learned Latin and French in addition to English, with per capita literacy rates at 91% in the late 1800s (Nogelmeier, 2003).

One primary tool the missionaries utilized in their efforts was the printing press. With this technology, books and newspapers written in 'ōlelo Hawai'i were printed and circulated in the community. One of the first printed books was the Bible. Despite the usage of 'ōlelo Hawai'i in printed text, however, 'ōlelo Hawai'i was considered a lower-status language, and instruction in 'ōlelo Hawai'i was not prioritized.

In the late 1800s, political unrest, foreign influence (including by American investors and businessmen), and the involvement of the U.S. military culminated in the illegal overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani in 1893. This was followed by the establishment of a provisional government and the American annexation of Hawai'i. The Republic of Hawai'i was established, made up of foreign businessmen and missionary descendants, who viewed 'ōlelo Hawai'i as a political threat. In June 1896, Act 57 was passed, which declared that only English could be used as the language of instruction in schools. Thus, children would no longer receive instruction in schools in 'ōlelo Hawai'i. Children were shamed and punished for speaking Hawaiian at school, and the language was stigmatized. This stigma expanded to other areas of Hawaiian society (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007).

From 1898 to 1959, 'ōlelo Hawai'i was mostly limited to the entertainment sector, while English permeated all other aspects of people's daily lives, in addition to dealings in business, schools, and government. The only remaining group of people who spoke 'ōlelo Hawai'i as their native language was a group of *kūpuna* (elders in their 70s) in a small, isolated community on the island of Ni'ihau (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007). In addition, 'ōlelo Hawai'i was being taught as a foreign language at the University of Hawai'i. By the late 1970s, fewer than 50 children were reported to speak Hawaiian. There was fear that once the *kūpuna* were gone, the language would also disappear (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007). A once-thriving language was at a precarious point.

Elders began strident efforts to revitalize its usage. In 1977, *Ka Leo O Hawai'i*, a Hawaiian language radio show, aired its first broadcast in 'ōlelo Hawai'i on KCCN in 1977. Also in 1977, the nonprofit organization 'Ahahui 'Ōlelo Hawai'i established standardized Hawaiian written language and conventions. Progress continued as 'ōlelo Hawai'i was recognized as a state language in 1978, and the 1896 law banning instruction in 'ōlelo Hawai'i in schools was lifted.

A small group of parents and educators wanted their children to learn ʻōlelo Hawai'i, but it had not been taught in schools for many decades, and the law that banned the language as a medium of instruction had only recently been lifted. The parents wanted their children to not only speak Hawaiian at home but also be educated through instruction delivered in the Hawaiian language. The parents knew that if ʻōlelo Hawai'i were to flourish again, it needed to be spoken in various settings (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007). Thus, in 1984, the ʻAha Pūnana Leo Hawaiian language immersion preschool was launched.

The establishment of the family-based language immersion preschool program provided multiple challenges for the teachers and parents in the first years it operated. There were many questions: Where would the curriculum and books come from? Which schools would be willing to allow a Hawaiian language immersion program in their school? Who had a teaching certificate and could speak Hawaiian? How would the program be funded?

The solutions to these questions came from the dedication of the first group of parents and educators, who created a program patterned after the successful efforts of the language and cultural revitalization of the Māori of Aotearoa (New Zealand) in the early 1980s (Kawaiʻae'a et al., 2007). School staff would translate materials and develop curriculum on a yearly basis, essentially laying the path for the children as the first cohort of students made their way through the program (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007). The preschool program expanded into a preschool through kindergarten and then added first grade, then second grade, and so on. Finally, the program expanded to cover preschool all the way to 12th grade for graduating high school seniors by 1992. In 1999, a cohort of students graduated that, for the first time in over 100 years, had been educated entirely in Hawaiian from kindergarten to grade 12. One parent shared, "As we are frequently met with unsupportive policies, institutional resistance, and supporters of the status quo, we continue to relay our *aloha* for the language, sharing the potential of and need for Hawaiian language immersion education" (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007, p. 202).

Some critics considered Hawaiian to be a "dead language" and expressed concern for the children's future, believing the children would not be able to attend college because they did not know English. The opposite was true, however, as the immersion program has a 100% high school graduation rate, and 80% of the graduates pursue higher education at the university level (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007). Figure 5.12 shows that common phrases in Hawaiian are used today.



Figure 5.12. *Mele Kalikimaka* translates as "Merry Christmas" and *Hau ʻoli Makahiki Hou* as "Happy New Year" in this image from the Honolulu City Lights taken in 2013. "Honolulu City Lights" by Daniel Ramirez. License: CC BY-2.0 Generic.

For the educators, parents, and now grandparents of the children who attend ʻōlelo Hawai'i programs, the revitalization of ʻōlelo Hawai'i is deeply important. It is the reconnection to their rich cultural heritage, the passing on of cultural wisdom from one generation to another, and a source of traditional knowledge. One parent marveled, "It was amazing to witness the *keiki* [children] fluently speaking, singing, praying, learning, playing, creating, fighting, and, I would surmise, dreaming, all in Hawaiian"' (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007). Children who learned in the language immersion program developed proficiency in multiple languages and formed strong cultural and self-identity (Kawai'ae'a et al., 2007).

Parents, grandparents, and educators involved in the language immersion program, as well as the graduates themselves, believe that their legacy is the Hawaiian language that lives on and continues to flourish in their children and grandchildren. Thanks to them, the language and their rich traditions are on the pathway to thrive once again. What is more, the model employed in the

development of the language immersion program has provided a model for other language revitalization efforts. In 2008, the ʻAha Pūnana Leo Hawaiian language immersion preschool celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=889#h5p-27

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5.6: Looking Ahead- Biculturalism

Monica Olvera

In this chapter, we have looked at how routines and rituals contribute to a sense of individual, family, or cultural identity. We have also discussed ways in which families adapt to cultural transitions. In this section, we will examine an adaptive strategy that may be especially beneficial for youth who experience changes in their cultural settings.

Biculturalism, sometimes also referred to as multiculturalism, can be conceptualized as someone who has been exposed to and internalizes elements from two or more cultures (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007). This can include people who are immigrants or descendants of immigrants, are members of a minoritized community, have parents from two different cultures, have mixed ethnic or racial backgrounds, have lived in more than one country, grow up with one culture in addition to the dominant mainstream culture, and those in multicultural relationships.

Adolescents and young adults who combine aspects of both their family of origin culture and the new culture and speak both languages tend to adjust better than those who either stay steeped in their root culture only or assimilate completely to their new culture (Kasinitz et al., 2008; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Biculturalism can promote feelings of pride, uniqueness, and a heightened awareness of community and history. Children in families who promote learning in two languages benefit in academic achievements, cognitive gains, self-esteem, and family cohesion (Espinosa, 2008; Han, 2012). Biculturalism has the strongest association with sociocultural and psychological adaptation (Nguyen & Benet-Martınez, 2013). As increasing numbers of people in the United States identify as being multiracial or biracial, this concept grows in importance. Do you know someone who identifies as bicultural?

Biculturalism can be seen as the availability of double resources and competencies that come from one's own ethnic/cultural group as well as the new and larger society. These resources and competencies can double a person's capacity to cope with cultural transitions (Sam & Berry, 2010). Having social support networks in more than one culture can buffer the psycho-socio-cultural challenges that might result from acculturation experiences, such as anxiety, loneliness, intercultural miscommunication, and interpersonal conflict (Repke & Benet-Martinez, 2018). Given the positive outcomes associated with biculturalism, it is our hope that people can be encouraged to get involved with the cultures they have internalized and that individuals' and families' cultural identities can be celebrated.

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5.7: Going Deeper

Monica Olvera and Elizabeth B. Pearce

Having read about traditions, ritual, and culture, this page has some additional resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- For more in-depth discussion about the complexities and drawbacks of pan-ethnic labels, please refer to this resource.
- If you would like to explore coming-of-age rituals in more depth, this TED Talk explores historic and modern important rites of passage and how they can help young teens understand what it means to become an adult by teaching life skills and reinforcing character traits and values.
- If you would like to explore the topic of how culture and religion overlap in human lives, we recommend the TED Talk by anthropologist Wade Davis, "The Worldwide Web of Belief and Ritual." Davis provides many examples of the deep familiarity and knowledge Indigenous communities develop and pass on to the next generations, with a focus on the Elder Brothers, a group of Sierra Nevada Native Americans.
- To further explore the different race, ethnicity, and origin categories used in the U.S. census, we recommend visiting this interactive resource by the Pew Research Center, "What Census Calls Us."
- For further information about quinceañeras, we recommend visiting the following resources:
  - "History and Traditions of Quinceañeras" from Mestizo.
  - "The history of the Quinceañera: How generations of Latinas entered womanhood in Phoenix."
  - "Sick with leukemia, her grandfather wouldn't make her quinceañera, so she brought the event to him."
- For additional information on the topic of the revitalization of ʻōlelo Hawai'i and the ripple effects of the movement, please explore the following resources:
  - "*He pūkoʻa kaniʻāina:* Creating Pathways for Indigenous Language Vitality | Candace Galla": an 11-minute TED Talk by Candace Galla about how the movement to revitalize ʻōlelo Hawai'i inspired many other Indigenous language communities around the world.
  - "The Hawaiian Language | Insights on PBS Hawai'i": a 56-minute discussion of the Hawaiian language with scholars and musicians who are fluent in the language.
  - "*Hoʻokipa*: Hawaiian Language Movement Visitation Program": 5 minutes of information about a program in Hilo, Hawai'i, that hosts hundreds of language advocates annually at various events and gatherings.
  - "Queen Lili'uokalani – The First and Last Queen of Hawai'i | Unladylike2020 | American Masters | PBS": 12 minutes of information about Queen Lili'uokalani, the first sovereign queen and the last monarch of Hawai'i, who assumed the throne in the midst of a government takeover by American business owners supported by the U.S. military.
  - "The Hawaiian Language Nearly Died. A Radio Show Sparked Its Revival": an article and associated 35-minute podcast episode about the radio show that was integral in efforts to revitalize the Hawaiian language.

Reflective Questions

1. What is the importance of routines in families? In particular, how can routines support a child's sense of security and healthy development?
2. Routines can be tricky to establish and maintain while attending college. What are some routines or habits you have tried to start or maintain? What has been helpful in keeping a routine going? What are some things that get in the way of maintaining a routine or habit?
3. Think about a ritual or tradition that you have practiced with your family or loved ones. Describe the ritual or tradition: What is the ritual? Who participates, and what are their roles?
4. This chapter discusses four life stages that are commonly marked by rites of passage: birth/family formation, coming of age, marriage/union formation, and dying/bereavement. Identify and describe a rite of passage in your own life or that of a family member or friend.
5. What are two models of cultural identity? Which one resonates most with you? Explain how it connects to your experience.
6. What are the ways you have created a sense of belonging, community, or rootedness?
7. What are some examples of cultural persistence and resistance? How do these activities contribute to family well-being?

Key Terms

- **Acculturation:** the process of adapting to a new culture.
- **Anchoring practices:** the behaviors, efforts, and actions people carry out to seek, create, and maintain a sense of community and rootedness.
- **Assimilation strategy:** an acculturation strategy consisting of pursuing and adopting the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the new society or dominant culture.
- **Biculturalism:** when a person has been exposed to and has internalized elements from two or more cultures.
- **Culture:** the shared meanings and shared experiences passed down over time by individuals in a group, such as beliefs, values, symbols, means of communication, religion, logics, rituals, fashions, etiquette, foods, and art that unite a particular society.
- **Cultural erasure:** the practice of a dominant or hegemonic culture actively or passively contributing to the erasure, or disappearing, of a non-dominant or minoritized culture.
- **Ethnic group:** a subgroup of a population with a set of shared social, cultural, and historical experiences; relatively distinctive beliefs, values, and behaviors; and some sense of identity of belonging to the subgroup.
- **Ethnic identity:** a sense of self that is derived from a sense of belonging to a group, a culture, and a particular setting.
- **Ethnicity:** the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences stemming from common national, ancestral, or regional backgrounds that make subgroups of a population different from one another.
- **Family ritual:** behaviors with symbolic meanings that can be clearly described and serve to organize and affirm central family ideas.
- **Family routine:** the predictable, repeated, consistent patterns that characterize everyday home life.
- **Heritage cultural orientation:** the extent to which individuals are involved with their heritage, ethnic, or nondominant culture.
- **Integration strategy:** an acculturation strategy utilized by those who wish to maintain one's original culture as a member of an ethnocultural group while also participating as an integral member of the larger social network.
- **Marginalization strategy:** an acculturation strategy where a person neither seeks relationships with aspects of the host culture nor maintains their heritage, culture, and identity.
- **Pan-ethnicity:** the grouping together of multiple ethnicities and nationalities under a single label.
- **Rite of passage:** a ritual or celebration that marks the passage when a person leaves one status, role, set of conditions, or group to enter another.
- **Separation strategy:** an acculturation strategy where a person places a high value on maintaining the integrity of their original cultural identity and avoids interaction with those of the new society.

Activity: Who Belongs? Immigrant Families and Intersectionality

This chapter focuses on the ways that families create and experience belonging through culture, tradition, and rituals. In earlier chapters you've learned about various forms of families, how they have changed over time, and the stigma that people in some family forms experience. In figure 5.13, watch to learn more about how immigrant families and other families with intersectional identities work to create stability, structure, and belonging for their families.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 5.13. Who Belongs?: Family Stories of Immigration [YouTube Video]. "Who Belongs?: Stories of Immigrant Families" features stories of college student families who are also immigrants. Transcript. "Who Belongs?: Family Stories of Immigration" by Kimberly Puttman, Kevin Acosta, Omar Ruiz Garcia, Samantha Kuk, and Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the changes in family forms that are discussed in the first part of the video.
2. How do immigrant families reflect or differ from these family forms?
3. What challenges do immigrant families face in creating stability for their families?
4. What are some examples of intersectionality that apply specifically to immigrant families and the immigration process?

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CHAPTER 6: REPRESENTATION AND BELONGING IN SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Learning Objectives

1. Reflect on the significance of representation, belonging, and equity in social institutions in your own experience and for contemporary families.
2. Describe the purpose, evolution, changes, and challenges of the census in counting every person in the United States.
3. Analyze how the formal decision-making process of voting affects families in the United States.
4. Discuss the barriers families encounter in voting and participation in the social process.
5. Analyze representation and belonging from an equity perspective with a focus on the feminist and Black Lives Matter movements.
6. Apply theoretical concepts related to representation and belonging to one's own observations and experiences.

6.1: Chapter Reading Guide

6.2: Representation, Belonging, and Equity

6.3: Decision-Making and Power

6.4: Working Outside of the System- Social Movements and Activism

6.5: Looking Ahead- Looking Back to Martin Luther King Jr.

6.6: Going Deeper

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6.1: Chapter Reading Guide

In this chapter you will learn about another way to think about belonging. Being represented in decision-making by being a part of both formal and informal processes contributes to a family's sense of belonging in a community, state, and country. You'll get a brief history of some of the social structures in the United States. Looking at the formal and informal ways of representation that expresses individuals' and families' needs is critical to thinking about families and equity.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Allies:** a person who forms relationships with and advocates with or for others who are marginalized but do not have that marginalized identity themselves.
- **American Community Survey (ACS):** a program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that gathers demographic information annually in the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- **Black feminist critiques:** a body of critical and creative work written by Black women in the United States regarding feminism and how it often ignores racism and class oppression.
- **Disenfranchisement:** the state of being rejected or being deprived of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote.
- **Feminist movement:** a series of social movements and political campaigns for radical and liberal reforms regarding sex and gender equity, women's issues, and sexism.
- **Representation:** the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way.
- **Social movement:** a loosely organized effort by a large group of people to achieve a social goal, such as carrying out change or resisting or undoing the status quo.
- **U.S. census:** a population census that takes place every 10 years and is legally mandated by the U.S. Constitution.
- **Voter registration:** the process whereby citizens register with election officials in order to become eligible to vote.

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6.2: Representation, Belonging, and Equity

Social institutions serve a critical function for society and contain a structure of rules and roles. Those roles almost always include some form of **representation**: a way in which decision-making is streamlined and the participants are somehow "seen" and acknowledged even if they do not directly participate in leadership. Representation means that families know that they belong, that they are important, that their needs are known, and that the institution is functional. If the representation does not serve these purposes, it is unlikely that outcomes will be equitable for families.

In this chapter, we will focus on formal and informal methods of representation. As you read, consider applying what you learn here to other institutions that are important to you, your friends, or your family—including K-12 schools, the college and university systems, health care and health insurance, businesses and corporations, prisons and courts, media, and others.

We will study a couple of the formal ways, through participation in the census and elections, that families can expect to be represented in the United States and how that representation plays out when we look at equity. This is important because governing bodies make decisions that affect all families. The definitions, laws, and regulations made by governments influence employers, business practices, schools, and other public facilities such as libraries and parks.

Social Identities and Institutions

Your social identities affect your experience with representation. In other words, it is likely that you, the reader, see representation through the lens of how well you have typically been represented in this country's institutions. Any individual's social identities are multifaceted (refer to the social identity wheel in Chapter 1), and each family member adds additional complexities. This is one of the more beautiful and challenging aspects of family life. It is aspirational to think that we live in a country where every family has equitable access to opportunity and representation. An aspect of this belief is that our representatives "see," "listen to," and understand the needs of families that they do not know personally.

In Focus: Do They "See" Me?

I am a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and am a White cisgender woman (figure 6.1). In many organizations, I observe that the majority of the leadership is White. I see many women decision-makers, although the percentage decreases as the level of power increases. And I see relatively few members of the LGBTQIA+ community in positions of leadership. Because this part of the population is small (about 10% or less), I do not expect a majority of leaders in any organization to be members of this group.

What I hope for is that, regardless of demographic, these leaders still work to understand me and my family. This is especially true of any aspect of my identity that has been marginalized; in my case, that is being a woman and being part of the LGBTQIA+ community. I hope that they listen to my stories. I hope that they "see" me. I hope that they work to educate themselves about families like mine so that even if I don't see people like me making the decisions that affect my family, I can trust that they still represent me.



Figure 6.1. Social identities are complex, and every family member adds additional complexities to identity. Family photographs by Elizabeth B. Pearce. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

When I think about representation from this perspective, I am not only considering the federal government. I am thinking about employers, city councils, my health care insurance and health care providers, the school board, and the local court system. All of these institutions affect families based on their identities and formations. It is important to note that all families are affected by all institutions, even if they are not "included" by the institution. In fact, those left out may be most affected. In my case, I was "left out" of the social process of legal marriage, which was historically controlled by state governments and now by federal law.

For example, health care and retirement benefits are typically tied to employers, whether they are public organizations, for-profit corporations, or not-for-profit entities. Those employers will determine which members of my family qualify for benefits and may be listed as beneficiaries of pension or life insurance policies. The school board is making decisions about forms, processes, rights, and responsibilities affecting my children. The local courts and judges interpret laws and make decisions about fostering and adoption, divorce, and custody agreements. In all of these cases, I want to know that the people in the decision-making roles have some understanding of who my family is and who I am, whether or not they share the same social identities. They are representing me, not just as an individual, but as a member of the community that designated them with this power.

Representation, Families, and Social Construction of Identities

Our social identities (including how others define us) affect what kind of representation we have experienced. At the same time, representation continues to contribute to the social construction of identity: color, ethnicity, gender, sex, socioeconomic status, ability, age, and so on. Understanding this relationship can help us increase equity in two ways:

- Reducing the effects of racialization and other forms of stereotyping that contribute to the marginalization of families and
- Acknowledging the ways that families who are part of the dominant culture benefit from the stereotyping and bias of marginalized groups.

When we talk about families, we are moving far beyond the social construction of the typical family and the ways that the government and other institutions define "family" for taxes, health care, and other legal rights and responsibilities. We are including all the ways that people define their own families. It is our aspirational goal to inspire readers to understand injustice more deeply via the ways that we are represented in institutions and to advocate and contribute to changes toward greater equity for families in the United States.

Each one of you who reads this has your own social identities that overlap with the identities within your family. As you read this chapter, consider what representation means to you and how you would like to be represented, included, or not included within the various institutions in which you participate.

The Significance of the U.S. Census to Family Well-Being

Next, we will look at the **U.S. census,** a survey that attempts to count all the people—not all citizens, but all people—living in the United States. This survey directly impacts the number of seats that a state has assigned in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as how federal funds are distributed. Then, we will look more closely at voting and the resulting elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels. Those officials are directly responsible for the laws and justice systems that govern us. Finally, we will look at an aspect of representation outside of the formal processes: activism and social movements.

The Evolution of the U.S. Census

The U.S. census is conducted every 10 years with the goal of counting every person in the country, although, as described below, it is almost impossible to reach this goal. The census collects information about the race, age, and housing situation of the population. The primary purpose of the census, as established in the Constitution, is to determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. Voting district boundaries must then be redrawn in states that have gained or lost seats between census years. Censuses also determine how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding are distributed for many important purposes that affect families, including education, health care, environmental protection, transportation, and other forms of federal aid to states and cities.

In 1791, the first U.S. census counted around 3.9 million people. There were only a few questions: the number of free persons, the number of enslaved people, and the sex and race of each individual (figure 6.2).

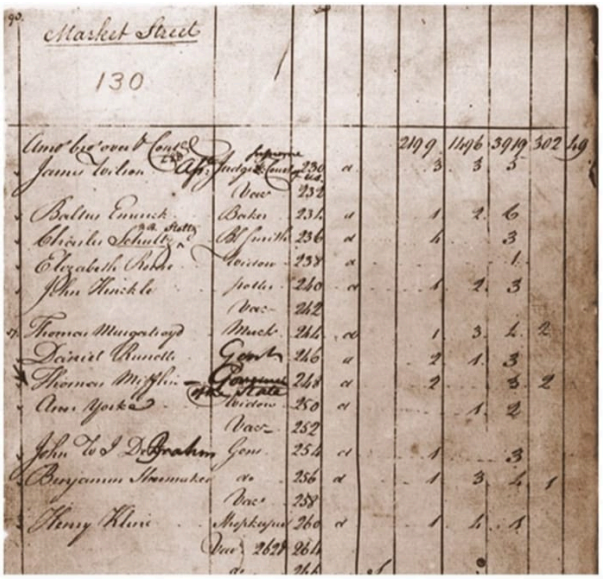
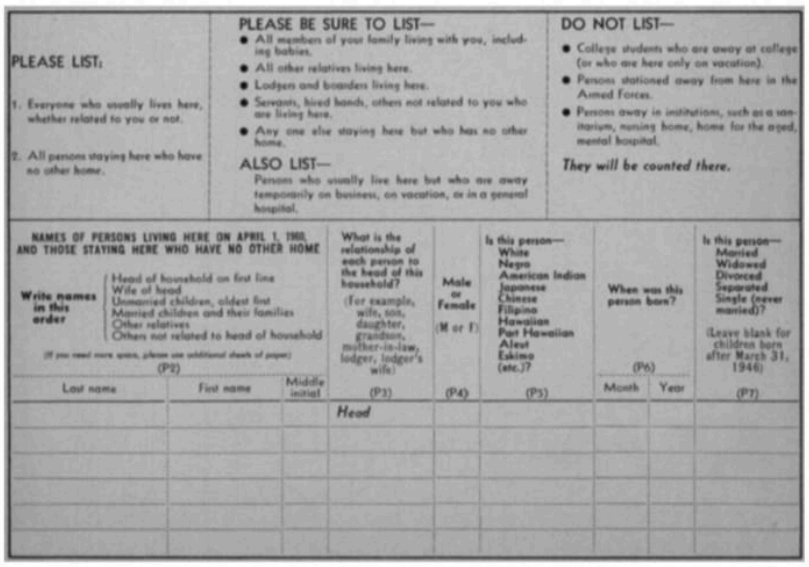


Figure 6.2. This census form for the first census in the United States in 1791 was filled out by a census taker who asked a few questions. Image by U.S. Census Bureau. Public domain.

By 1960, with the population approaching 180 million, it was no longer feasible to have a census taker visit each household. Instead, questionnaires were mailed to every household, and temporary employees followed up in person with the households that did not respond (figure 6.3).



PLEASE LIST:

1. Everyone who usually lives here, whether related to you or not.
2. All persons staying here who have no other home.

PLEASE BE SURE TO LIST—

- All members of your family living with you, including babies.
- All other relatives living here.
- Lodgers and boarders living here.
- Servants, hired hands, others not related to you who are living here.
- Any one else staying here but who has no other home.

ALSO LIST—

Persons who usually live here but who are away temporarily on business, on vacation, or in a general hospital.

DO NOT LIST—

- College students who are away at college (or who are here only on vacation).
- Persons stationed away from here in the Armed Forces.
- Persons away in institutions, such as a sanitarium, nursing home, home for the aged, mental hospital.

They will be counted there.

NAMES OF PERSONS LIVING HERE ON APRIL 1, 1960, AND THOSE STAYING HERE WHO HAVE NO OTHER HOME

Write names in this order: Head of household on first line; Wife of head; Unmarried children, oldest first; Married children and their families; Other relatives; Others not related to head of household

(If you need more space, please use additional sheets of paper)

(P2)

Last name	First name	Middle initial	What is the relationship of each person to the head of this household? (For example, wife, son, daughter, grandson, mother-in-law, lodger, lodger's wife) (P3)	Male or Female (M or F) (P4)	Is this person— White, Negro, American Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Part Hawaiian, Aleut, Eskimo (etc.)? (P5)	When was this person born? (P6) Month	Year	Is this person— Married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Single (never married)? (Leave blank for children born after March 31, 1946) (P7)
			Head					

Figure 6.3 This is a blank copy of the 1960 census form that was mailed to each household to be filled out. Image by U.S. Census Bureau. Public domain.

Questions asked of all households now include the number of persons by age, gender, ethnicity, homeownership, and household composition. Between 1940 and 2000, one in six households also received a more detailed "long-form" survey that asked questions about a much wider range of topics, including income, occupation, commute length, and military service. The U.S. Census Bureau then used this sample to estimate the characteristics of the rest of the population.

Demand for more timely social data led to the development of the **American Community Survey (ACS)**, which replaced the long-form census survey in 2010. The ACS is conducted every year in order to provide more frequent "snapshots" of the demographic, economic, and housing characteristics of the population. However, only 2 to 3 million households receive the survey per year (less than 2% of the population), which introduces substantial statistical errors in estimates for the whole population. Data for the census and ACS are collected from each household, but in order to preserve privacy and to make the data easier to use, the U.S. Census Bureau aggregates the data into larger geographic areas.

Limitations of Census Data

The census is the most comprehensive source of demographic information available for the United States, but it still has important limitations.

The primary challenge is accuracy and undercounting. The census attempts to take a snapshot of how many people there are and where they are living on April 1 of the census year. The method for collecting data assumes that every person lives in a housing unit with a postal address and that they will respond accurately to surveys. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that approximately 10 million people were missed in its 2010 count (figure 6.4).



Figure 6.4. The first enumeration of the 2010 census took place in Noorvik, Alaska. An early start allowed census takers to reach remote villages before residents left to hunt and fish or travel for warm-weather jobs following the spring thaw. Image by U.S. Census Bureau. Public domain.

Undercounting is not random because it is more prevalent in certain areas and subpopulations. Those who are houseless or have unstable housing at the time of the census are often missed. Those residing in remote rural areas can be hard to contact by mail or in person. The census is also less likely to receive responses from those who distrust the government, such as people fearful that their answers will be used by immigration enforcement to deport undocumented family members.

The census is only taken every 10 years, and the counts have long-term consequences for states and cities. The accuracy of counts can be very contentious in cash-strapped cities. For example, Detroit challenged the findings of the 2010 census, having come up 40,000 people short of a population cutoff point for many major sources of federal funding. Because under-resourced and marginalized populations are among the hardest to count, districts with the most need are also the most at risk of underfunding and underrepresentation.

Why the U.S. Census Focuses on Race

Race was emphasized in the first census, and the video in figure 6.5 helps us understand why. It was important related to the number of voters (mostly free White men over the age of 21 years) and the number of elected representatives. The video also describes the changes in how race and ethnicity have been quantified.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 6.5. Why Does the Government Care about Race? [YouTube Video]. This video will help you understand why the government cares about race. Transcript. "Why Does the Government Care about Race?" © Origin of Everything. License: Standard YouTube License.

Remember the discussion of the social construction of race in Chapter One? The changing definitions of race within the census data are a perfect example of the socially constructed aspect of race. But social constructions have real effects on families and kinship groups. One of the reasons that we continue to quantify race is to track access to resources and the equity of experience for individuals and families.

Challenges to Census Participation

The 2020 census count was ended early by the Trump Administration. Originally scheduled to end on December 30, 2020, all counting ceased on October 31, 2020. The U.S. Census Bureau has identified populations that are less likely to participate in the process as "hard to count (HTC)" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Have you or your family members participated in the census? Perhaps your family falls into a group that the U.S. Census Bureau identifies as hard to locate, contact, persuade, or interview. It is likely that fewer people, primarily in the HTC groups, participated in the 2020 census due to its shortened timeline.

Increased efforts to limit immigration and other quickly changing laws and policies related to immigrants in recent years may reduce the number of immigrants willing to participate. The COVID-19 pandemic likely affected the number of college students who responded to the census. The main dates for the mailing of census forms were between April 1 and May 13, 2020, at a time when many college students abandoned their regular place of residence (such as a dormitory or apartment building in a college town) and went to live with parents or other family members. Towns with large universities may be affected by lower census counts because of this pattern.

Because census results have a big impact on representation and, therefore, access to political influence and government resources, people have created organizations designed to encourage census participation. We Count Oregon is an organization and website that has been developed to persuade everyone to participate in the census. Why? The more people who participate, the more federal funding will be available for hospitals, Medicaid, Head Start, parks, roads, and other programs. For example, Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, and Texas all added seats in the House of Representatives following the 2020 census. We Count Oregon identifies HTC communities as including "people of color, children under five, renters, immigrants, people with limited English proficiency, multiple-family homes, Native tribal and urban communities, disabled people, and LGBTQ individuals" (We Count Oregon, n.d.).

If you missed the 2020 census, the ACS (which samples a much smaller part of the population) is an opportunity to be counted each year. If you are selected, it is an opportunity to have your family represented by the many scholars, groups, and decision-makers in the United States.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=897#oembed-2

https://vimeo.com/388180134

Figure 6.6. The 2020 Census Is about Money and Power [Vimeo Video]. This video explains how participating in the census could help you and your family. Transcript. "The 2020 Census Is about Money and Power" © Dancing Hearts Consulting. License: Standard Vimeo License.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=897#h5p-28

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6.3: Decision-Making and Power

Much of the decision-making in the United States is executed by elected officials via legislation that passes through several branches of government. While most are elected by popular vote, the president is elected through the electoral college and some leaders, including the president, have the authority to appoint other decision-making officials such as judges and cabinet secretaries. People who have the right to vote, and who choose to vote, have some influence on who gets elected. Voting is important and is one aspect of representation, a potential equalizer in a country in which some decisions are made via direct democracy (each individual has a vote) and others are made by representative democracy (elected representatives).

As we will explore in this section, however, there are complicating factors that affect elections and equity.

Who Votes?

There are a variety of reasons that people don't vote in local, state, and national elections. Thomas Jefferson is known for saying, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate." Ironically, Jefferson was a part of the legislature that limited which people in the United States actually had the right to vote. In fact, what he could have said was, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority of people whom we have allowed to vote and who participate." This text aims to examine how institutions still limit voting rights both explicitly and implicitly.



Figure 6.7. People who are older, non-Hispanic, and more educated are more likely to vote. "Voting_02" by U.S. Department of State. License: CC BY-NC 2.0.

In general, voter turnout in the United States is higher during presidential elections, which occur every four years. As shown in figure 6.7, many people must vote physically in person at designated times. In measurements between 1984 through 2016, people who are older, non-Hispanic, and more educated are most likely to vote. Those who are 60+ years old vote the most, followed by those aged 45 to 59 years, then by those aged 30 to 44 years, and with 18- to 29-year-olds having the lowest likelihood of voting with more than double 60+-year-old voting (65%) compared with 31% of 18- to 29-year-olds voting in the 2018 election.

It could be argued that the youngest citizens have the most at stake and could have the greatest impact on the future of the United States and yet they are voting less. And yet, younger, less educated, and Latine people are less likely to vote. What is behind the numbers that people in these demographics are voting less?

Voter Registration Across the United States

Elections are state-by-state contests. They include general elections for president and statewide offices (e.g., governor and U.S.

senator), and they are often organized and paid for by the states. Because political cultures vary from state to state, the process of voter registration also varies. **Voter registration** is the process that is determined state by state for citizens to register in order to be eligible to participate in elections. For example, suppose an 85-year-old retiree with an expired driver's license wants to register to vote. The retiree might be able to register quickly in California or Florida, but a current government ID might be required prior to registration in Texas or Indiana.

The varied registration and voting laws across the United States have long caused controversy. In the aftermath of the Civil War, southern states worked to **disenfranchise**, meaning to deprive of rights, especially of voting, to Black people. They enacted literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and other requirements in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. Literacy tests were long and detailed exams on local and national politics, history, and more. They were often administered arbitrarily, with more Black voters required to take them than White voters (Medvic, 2014). Consider these literacy tests along with the practice of refusing schooling to Black children, and you will understand how these requirements became part of a racist system that prevented Black people from voting. Poll taxes required voters to pay a fee to vote.

The passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965 (figure 6.8) had a profound effect. The act protected the rights of minority voters by prohibiting state laws that denied voting rights based on race. The VRA gave the U.S. attorney general authority to order federal examiners to areas with a history of discrimination. These examiners had the power to oversee and monitor voter registration and elections. States found to violate provisions of the VRA were required to get changes in their election laws approved by the U.S. attorney general or by going through the court system.

In 2013, the Supreme Court, in a 5–4 decision, threw out the standards and process of the VRA, effectively gutting the landmark legislation. This decision effectively pushed decision-making and discretion for election policy in VRA states to the state and local levels. Several such states subsequently made changes to their voter ID laws, including limiting the number of polling places in certain areas. Texas also restricted voting based on photographic identification. These changes often do not have a neutral effect. In fact, when the U.S. Court of Appeals struck down one North Carolina law in 2016, they found that it targeted "African Americans with almost surgical precision."





Figure 6.8. The Voting Rights Act is pictured on the left. The photo on the right shows the Voting Rights Act being signed into law on August 6, 1965, by President Lyndon B. Johnson, left, in the presence of major figures of the civil rights movement, including Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr., center. "The First Page of the Voting Rights Act of 1965." Public domain. "President Lyndon B. Johnson Meets with Martin Luther King Jr. at the Signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965" by Yoichi Robert Okamoto. Public domain.

The effects of the VRA were visible almost immediately. In Mississippi, only 6.7% of Black people were registered to vote in 1965; however, by the fall of 1967, nearly 60% were registered. Alabama experienced similar effects, with African American registration increasing from 19.3% to 51.6%. Voter turnout across these two states similarly increased. Mississippi went from 33.9% turnout to 53.2%, while Alabama increased from 35.9% to 52.7% between the 1964 and 1968 presidential elections (Grofman et al., 1992).

Following the implementation of the VRA, many states have sought other methods of increasing voter registration. Several states make registering to vote relatively easy for citizens who have government documentation. Oregon has few requirements for

registering and registers many of its voters automatically. North Dakota has no registration at all. In 2002, Arizona was the first state to offer online voter registration, which allowed citizens with a driver's license to register to vote without any paper application or signature. The system matches the information on the application to information stored at the Department of Motor Vehicles to ensure each citizen is registering to vote in the right precinct. Citizens without a driver's license still need to file a paper application. More than 18 states have moved to online registration or passed laws to begin doing so. The National Conference of State Legislatures estimates, however, that adopting an online voter registration system can initially cost a state between $250,000 and $750,000 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014).

Other states have decided against online registration. Legislators also argue that online registration makes it difficult to ensure that only citizens are registering and that they are registering in the correct precincts. Technology continues to be increasingly used in other areas of state recordkeeping, and citizens have pressured the states and pushed the process along. A bill to move registration online in Florida stalled for over a year in the legislature based on security concerns. With strong citizen support, however, it was passed and signed in 2015 despite the governor's lingering concerns.

In Focus: Social Locations

In this text, we will talk a lot about physical location in regard to family—that is, where families live and work. We will also consider **social locations,** the combination of identities and factors such as gender, race, age, body size, neurodiversity along with the power and privilege of each factor. Consider the power and privilege that come with each identity, as shown in figure 6.9.

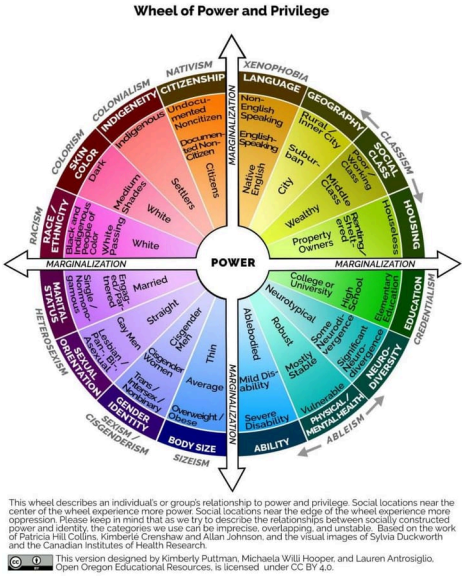


Figure 6.9. It is by looking at all of our identities and circumstances in combination with one another that we can see how much power or privilege each of us has. Image description. "Wheel of Power and Privilege," designed by Kimberly Puttman, Michaela Willi Hooper, and Lauren Antrosiglio, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0.

As we discuss representation in this chapter and many other family needs in the chapters to come, keep this wheel in mind. How does power and privilege affect each family's feeling of belonging and being represented in society?

If you would like to explore this wheel and the questions above more deeply, explore the Power and Belonging Analysis video and activity in the "Going Deeper" section.

Voting by Mail

Oregon was the first state to enact postal voting, or "vote by mail," in the United States in 1998. Voter turnout dramatically increased with this adaptation, and Oregon continues to have one of the highest participation rates in the country. Of course, absentee and early voting have long been available for military families and for individuals by request. As of 2020, Colorado, Hawaii, Washington, and Utah have all converted to vote-by-mail elections. The coronavirus pandemic has raised concerns about people visiting crowded polling places, and 46 states are now loosening restrictions on vote by mail. To view the voting status of individual states, check out Ballotpedia; to investigate overall voting information, consult this USA.gov website.

Research repeatedly shows that allowing people to vote by mail increases participation. A draft working paper of a Stanford University study found that postal voting in Colorado increased voter participation by 10%. Notably, turnout among groups less likely to vote increased even more: 16% among young people, 13% among African Americans, 11% among Asian Americans, and 10% among Latine Americans, blue-collar workers, those without a high school diploma, and those with less than $10,000 of wealth (Bonica et al., 2020).

Republican lawmakers are divided on the issue of voting by mail, while Democratic lawmakers generally support this effort. Experts, including researchers and political science professors, do not believe that voting by mail is likely to increase fraud. Voting continues to be a state responsibility, which means it varies a great deal. In the November 2020 election, that variance became a point of legal and social debate. Not only did states already have differing processes, but the legislators' efforts to ensure that as many people as possible could vote, given the social distancing required by the pandemic, created greater discrepancies and differences in voting rules. While then-President Donald Trump and many other individuals questioned the validity of these processes in four states that had close presidential vote counts, the courts and the officials of those states consistently verified the results.

Barriers to Participation in the Social Process

Although the right to vote is more equitably distributed than in the past, institutional and societal factors still influence who actually votes. If there were times that you didn't vote, what got in the way? A busy life might keep you from voting. In the following sections, we'll explore some of the most common barriers to voting.

Socioeconomic Status, Families, and Voting

When voting is limited to one day (e.g., 12 hours in November), people who have more restrictive work, school, parenting, childcare, or other schedules will have more challenges in getting to the polling location during the limited time. Workers in jobs with less autonomy (e.g., retail, clerical, and blue-collar workers) have less flexibility on voting day than those in managerial or professional positions. Transportation can be a factor; personal vehicles provide the most efficiency in a busy life. Using shared vehicles, public transportation, bicycles, and walking (while more cost and energy-effective) all take longer.

If you are a working parent faced with choosing between getting food on the table for your two young children or transporting them and waiting in line to vote in the election, which do you choose? If you need to race home from work so that your partner can use your shared vehicle to get to their evening shift, do you then go take a bus to vote?

Families with a lower socioeconomic status are more likely to have a combination of these factors that contribute to having less flexibility and less time (figure 6.10). Families who have more resources, in general, have more resources related to political activity and are more likely to participate in voting in person. Those who are unemployed are the least likely to vote.



Figure 6.10. Families with a lower socioeconomic status face more barriers getting to polling stations. “Waiting” by vistavision. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Disabilities and Voting

People with disabilities vote at a 6% lower rate than people who do not have disabilities and share other demographic characteristics, as measured by Rutgers University in the 2016 election (Schur & Kruse, 2017). Why might that be? One factor may be the polling places themselves. The U.S. Government Accountability Office observed 178 polling places during that same election. They found that 60% of the polling places had some kind of physical impediment between the parking lot and the entry to the buildings (figure 6.11). Of the 137 that could be observed inside, 65% had polling stations that could impede someone from casting their votes independently, as shown in figure 6.11 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2017).

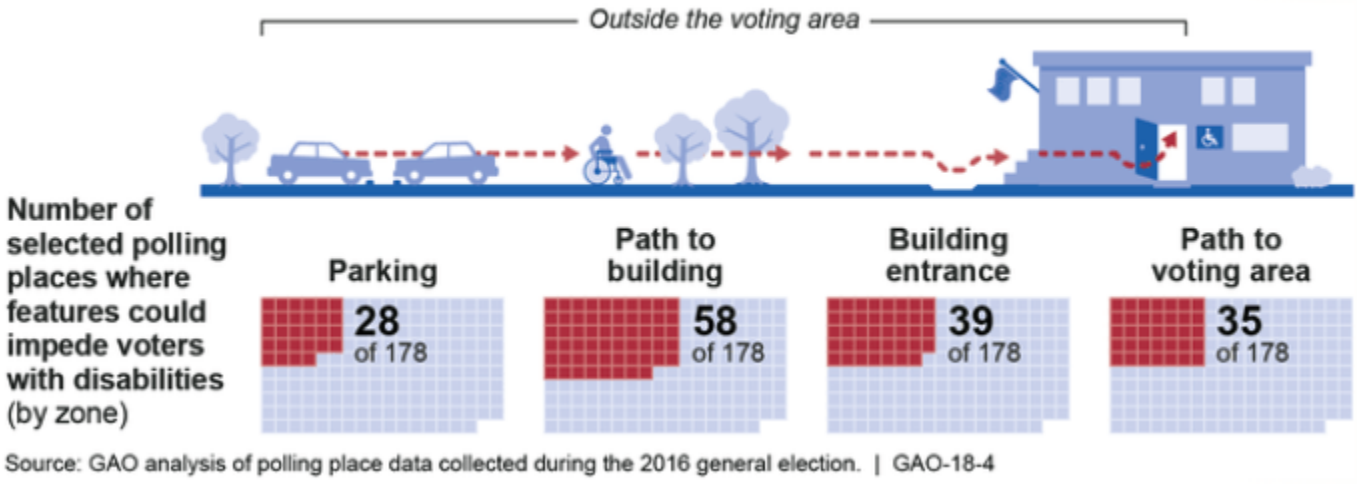


Figure 6.11. Voters with disabilities often face physical barriers to voting, including inaccessible parking, paths, and entrances. “Number of Selected Polling Places where Features Could Impede Voters with Disabilities (by Zone)” by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Public domain.

There are efforts underway to improve access to voting and participation among people with disabilities. The American Association of People with Disabilities is working in selected states to increase voter registration and turnout. REVUP (Register, Educate, Vote, Use Your Power) has shown a 1% increase in the voting participation of people with disabilities in REVUP states compared with non-REVUP states between 2014 and 2018 (Schur & Kruse, 2019). This is a small increase in a very large sample, and it is difficult to say if REVUP is the main factor.

Felony Convictions and Voting

The majority of states in the United States limit people who have been convicted of felonies from voting, at least during the time that they are incarcerated (the exceptions are Maine and Vermont). Variances among states include whether rights are lost just while incarcerated, while still serving parole or probation, or whether rights are restored automatically after release. Oregon is one of 16 states plus the District of Columbia that automatically restore rights (National Council of State Legislatures, 2019).

There are 11 states that have additional restrictions, including the payment of fees, fines, and restitution before voting rights are restored. These kinds of restrictions treat families unevenly; individuals who have lower income and no accumulated wealth will be less likely to be able to access their voting rights than will people with wealth and means.

Generally, the trend over the last few decades by states is to restore voting rights to felons once they are released. There are variations state by state as these movements go forward. What is your viewpoint about the right to vote and how it overlaps with people who have committed crimes? Do you think that people serving time should be able to vote? What about those who have rehabilitated or paid a debt to society? What about those same people, whether they are poor or rich? Should socioeconomic status affect the right to vote?

Residency and Citizenship Status and Voting

Citizenship status also can pose a barrier to voting. According to USA.gov, non-citizens, including permanent legal residents, cannot vote in federal, state, and most local elections (USA.gov, n.d.).

There are 14 U.S. territories, all of which are in the Pacific or Caribbean Oceans. Thirteen of these territories, including Puerto Rico, are unincorporated, which means that only select parts of the Constitution apply to them. For example, they do not have representation in the U.S. Congress or Senate, do not pay federal income tax, and cannot vote for the president of the United States. Residents of Puerto Rico voted in favor of full statehood in the 2020 elections via a non-binding referendum (WorldAtlas, 2020). Many people believe that the citizens of Puerto Rico and other territories would benefit from statehood and representation at the federal level.

Feeling Disenfranchised

There are times when people feel so disconnected from the process of democracy and representation that voting seems hopeless. If elected officials repeatedly fail to discuss issues of importance to a person or their family, or if the decision outcomes are consistently inadequate, people may develop apathy toward the voting process. Growing up in a family where the parent(s) don't vote or who express cynicism or distrust toward representatives and the voting process also impacts children's views of the system and participation. As discussed at length in this chapter, there has been a great deal of effort made to limit people of color, the poor, and immigrants from voting in at least some states. It's hard to think that you belong and that your vote matters when institutions work against your voting rights, as expressed in the following quote.

> Voting is not an act of political freedom. It is an act of political conformity. Those who refuse to vote are not expressing silence. They are screaming in the politician's ear: "You do not represent me. This is not a process in which my voice matters. I do not believe you."
>
> —Wendy McElroy, a Canadian individualist feminist and anarcho-capitalist writer

In some states, one political party (Democratic or Republican) has such a majority position that if you are a member of the other dominant party or of an alternative party, it may not seem "worth it" to vote. They may feel that their vote doesn't make a difference or that the election is not a competitive one.

Who Can Afford to Serve in an Elected Position?

Does your city have an elected council? How about your school board? Are judges elected or appointed in your area? Is there a County Board of Commissioners? Take a minute to think about what you know about how someone gets one of these positions. Are they paid at all? If so, do they pay enough to support an individual or family? Many of them are elected positions, although they are not paid. For example, in Corvallis, Oregon, neither the school board nor the city council are paid positions. The Benton County Commissioner positions (of which Corvallis is a part) are paid; three Commissioners each made between $84,000 and

$94,100 in 2019 (Hall, 2019). Typically, the salaries of public employees are public information, and you can find them via an internet search on the entity's website or in a newspaper report on salary negotiations.

We ask these questions for several reasons. First, those decision-makers affect all of our lives. If you question whether or not a school board member affects your daily life, consider those board members who decided how and if school will be held during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consider the recent national and local debates about what kinds of bathrooms and locker rooms students can access and who determines which students will use which bathrooms.

Many of these local positions are unpaid. If they are not paid but require many hours of work each week, consider who is most likely to have the time available for such a position. Corvallis School Board Members are expected to devote time to reading policies, citizen input, budget documents, and related research as well as participating in trainings, committee discussions, and formal meetings. The time commitment varies from five to twenty hours per week and is unpredictable. This time commitment is similar for city council members; remember that both positions are unpaid.

Given this context, it is likely that people who have a high enough income or accumulated wealth, a career that allows flexibility in work hours, or who are retired will be more likely to be able to afford the time and to dominate these boards. It is important to appreciate these public servants, their volunteer commitment, and their efforts to listen to all of their constituents. It is also important to acknowledge that these decision-makers are more likely to be older, have greater income and wealth, and have more education. How do you think this might influence the discussions the groups have and the decisions that they make? How would families benefit from a system that is more representative of the communities served? What systemic changes could be made to include voices that more fully represent the population?

Do Demographics Matter?

Ask yourself, how do social characteristics that make up social identity matter when it comes to who represents all families in the decision-making spaces of this country? This is a good time to remind yourself of the social identity wheel introduced in Chapter 1. When we talk about demographics, we are looking at the statistical data related to social identities, or the middle ring of the wheel, as shown in figure 6.12.

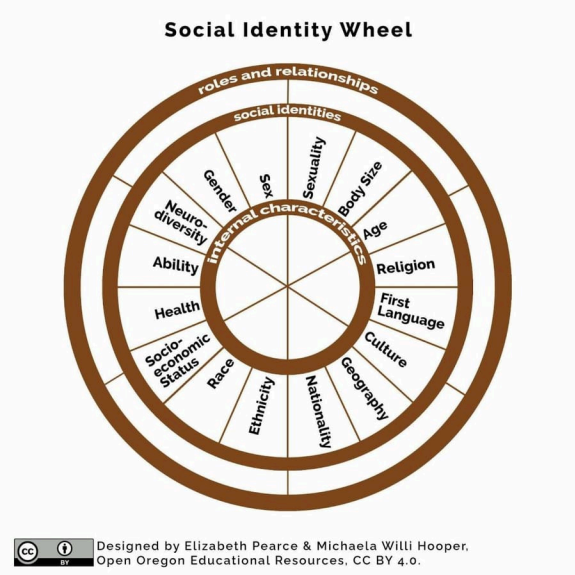


Figure 6.12. When we talk about demographics, we are looking at the statistical data related to social identities. Image description. "Social Identity Wheel" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0.

Let's look at some of the demographics that are reported most frequently: race and gender. This very short (under two minutes) video from wholeads.us compares the demographics of the population in the United States with those of elected officials (figure 6.13).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 6.13. Who Leads Us? [YouTube Video]. This video helps us see whether our democracy is reflective of our demographics. Transcript. "Who Leads Us?" © Women's Donor Network. License Terms: Standard YouTube License.

If you would like to dig deeper into understanding the Social Identity Wheel and the characteristics included, watch the first four minutes of "Social Identities" here. In addition, later parts of the video make distinctions between sex, gender, and sexuality as well as between race, ethnicity and culture. The last four minutes of the video explain intersectionality and social location more fully.

When the demographics are so skewed, we must ask ourselves whether those who are less represented via social identity are being treated equitably. Not just in the past but right now.

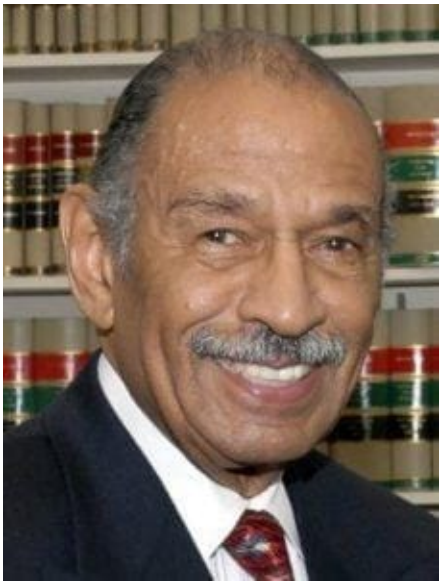


Figure 6.14. Representative John Conyers Jr. (D-Michigan) introduced House Resolution 40 to study the effects of slavery 28 times. It has still not been passed. "United States Representative John Conyers (D-MI) Official Photo" by U.S. Congress. Public domain.

For example, in 1989, Representative John Conyers Jr. (D-Michigan) pictured in figure 6.14, introduced House Resolution (H.R.) 40 to the U.S. Congress for the first time. (The number "40" refers to the unfulfilled promise made that when slavery ended, every freed family would be allotted plots of land no larger than 40 acres, plus a mule. This proclamation was reversed by President Andrew Johnson after President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.) Representative Conyers, who died in 2019, proposed H.R. 40 a total of 28 times, once per year from 1989 until 2017.

Which laws and policies would be moved forward, voted on, and passed if Black people had greater representation among elected officials? What if the system supported the employment of people of lower socioeconomic status in decision-making roles? How would this affect the inequality that families experience in the United States? Could you imagine how housing, health care, and employment might be different? These authors believe that more equitable representation, while not the only needed change, will lead to equitable access to education, health care, housing, food, and water. This will benefit all families, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.

There has been some progress toward more diverse representation among our elected officials. Pew Research reports that the racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. Congress has grown gradually between 2001 and 2019. Currently, 116 members of the House

of Representatives are people of color, which is an 84% increase over the 107th Congress of 2001 (Bialik, 2019). When it comes to gender parity, while the number of women who are participating in elected positions is increasing in the United States, it is increasing at a slower pace than in the rest of the world. While we ranked 48th in the world for elected gender parity in 2000 (out of 192 countries), 20 years later, we have sunk to 82nd in the world as measured by Represent Women's research.

Comprehension Self Check

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6.4: Working Outside of the System- Social Movements and Activism

We've spent a large portion of this chapter focused on historical and current aspects of the way social processes work in this country: the census, voting, representation, the courts, and elected officials. We have attempted to uncover some of the flaws, gaps, and structures that lead to unequal representation and treatment of families. Change within these processes is possible, but sometimes challenging because the existing structures favor some groups and reinforce negative bias and inequality toward others. Working outside of the systems to push for change is an alternative for people whom the systems have marginalized.

Social Movements

A **social movement** may be defined as an organized effort by a large number of people to bring about or impede social, political, economic, or cultural change. Defined in this way, social movements might sound similar to special-interest groups, and they do have some things in common. But a major difference between social movements and special-interest groups lies in the nature of their actions. Special-interest groups normally work within the system via conventional political activities such as lobbying and election campaigning. In contrast, social movements often work outside the system by engaging in various kinds of protest, including demonstrations, picket lines, sit-ins, and sometimes outright violence (figure 6.15).



Figure 6.15. Social movements are organized efforts by large numbers of people to bring about or impede social change. Often they try to do so by engaging in various kinds of protest, such as the march depicted in this figure. "Clampdown, We Are the 99%" by Glenn Halog. License: CC BY-NC 2.0.

In this section we will look at selected periods of time and social movements—ones that have influenced family roles and relationships while simultaneously advocating for equal rights and responsibilities. In addition, we will emphasize the intersectional nature of social movements and social change. Let's start with feminism.

Feminism and Family Roles

Feminist movements have generated and nurtured feminist theories and academic knowledge. Feminist movements use critical reflection about the world to change it. It is because of various social movements—feminist activism, workers' activism, and civil rights activism throughout the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries—that "feminist history" is a viable field of study today. Feminist history is part of a larger history that draws on the experiences of traditionally ignored and disempowered groups (e.g., factory workers, immigrants, people of color, lesbians) to rethink and challenge the histories that have been traditionally written from the experiences and points of view of the powerful (e.g., colonizers, representatives of the state, the wealthy)—the histories we

typically learn in high school textbooks.

What has come to be called the first wave of the feminist movement began in the mid-19th century focused on laws that would give women the right to vote, the right to education and employment, and striking down laws in which her property passed to her new husband upon marriage. The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments (Falls, n.d.), passed in 1848, describes many "repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman" and includes 16 submitted facts, including these:

- He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.
- He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.
- He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they are done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband.
- He has so framed the laws of divorce as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man and giving all power into his hands.
- He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.
- He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.
- He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.



Figure 6.16. White, middle-class, first-wave feminists fought for the right to vote, own property, and access education and employment. "Votes for Women Sellers, 1908" by LSE Library. Public domain.

Demanding women's enfranchisement, the abolition of men's control over their wives, and access to employment and education were quite radical demands at the time. These demands, pictured in figure 6.16, confronted the ideology of the cult of true womanhood, summarized in four key tenets—piety, purity, submission, and domesticity—which held that White women were rightfully and naturally located in the private sphere of the household. Think back to our discussion of the idealized nuclear family in Chapter One.

This emphasis on confronting the ideology of the cult of true womanhood was shaped by the White middle-class standpoint of the leaders of the movement. The cult of true womanhood was an ideology of White womanhood that systematically denied Black and working-class women access to the category of "women" because working-class and Black women, by necessity, had to labor outside of the home.

The Intersectionality of Social Movements

Meanwhile, working-class women and women of color knew that mere access to voting did not overturn class and race inequalities. As feminist activist and scholar Angela Davis writes, working-class women "were seldom moved by the suffragists' promise that the vote would permit them to become equal to their men—their exploited, suffering men" (Davis, 1981). Furthermore,

the largest suffrage organization, the National American Woman Suffrage Association—a descendent of the National Women Suffrage Association—barred the participation of Black women suffragists in its organization. Intersectionality, introduced in Chapter One, helps us to understand the overlap of the feminist and civil rights movements.

The abolitionist movement—which sought to end slavery—and the racial justice movement followed the end of the Civil War. In some ways, both movements were largely about having self-ownership and control over one's body (Cott, 2000). For enslaved people, that meant freedom from lifelong, unpaid, forced labor, as well as freedom from the sexual assault that many enslaved Black women suffered from their enslavers. For married White women, it meant recognition as people in the face of the law and the ability to refuse their husbands' sexual advances. This analogy between marriage and slavery had resonance at the time, but it problematically conflated the unique experience of the racialized oppression of slavery that African American women faced with a very different type of oppression than White women. While White women abolitionists and feminists of the time made important contributions to anti-slavery campaigns, they often failed to understand the uniqueness and severity of enslaved women's lives and the complex system of chattel slavery (Davis, 1983).

Despite their marginalization, Black women emerged as passionate and powerful leaders. Ida B. Wells, a particularly influential activist who participated in the movement for women's suffrage, was a founding member of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (figure 6.17). As a journalist, she authored numerous pamphlets and articles exposing the violent lynching of thousands of African Americans. She said that lynching in the Reconstruction Period was a systematic attempt to maintain racial inequality despite the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868 (which held that African Americans were citizens and could not be discriminated against based on their race) (Wells, 1893). Additionally, thousands of African American women were members of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, which was pro-suffrage but did not receive recognition from the predominantly middle-class, White National American Woman Suffrage Association.



Figure 6.17. Ida B. Wells was a founding member of the NAACP and a journalist who exposed the lynchings of thousands of African Americans. "Ida B. Wells Barnett" by Mary Garrity. Public domain.

As you can see, feminist and abolitionist movements were working toward equal rights, but often, people at the intersection of both movements, Black women, were sometimes left out.

World War II and Family Well-Being

Social movements are not static entities; they change according to movement gains or losses, and these gains or losses are dependent on the political and social contexts of the time. Following women's suffrage in 1920, feminist activists channeled their energy into institutionalized legal and political channels for effecting changes in labor laws and attacking discrimination against women in the workplace. While workplaces were now more available to women than they were just a few decades earlier, inequities in pay and working conditions were quite visible. World War II provides an excellent example of how women, people of color, and working families all gained rights and wealth.

While millions of women were already working in the United States at the beginning of World War II, labor shortages during

World War II allowed millions of women to move into higher-paying factory jobs that had previously been occupied by men. The Lanham act allocated monies for both universal childcare and additional services for school-age children including an extended supervision period. Schools also provided additional services such as child infirmaries, multiple meals during the school day, and take-home meals for 50 cents per family (State of Oregon, n.d.). These examples of wrap-around childcare, sick childcare, and nutritious meals all show the ways that the government was able to support working families in a meaningful way.

Simultaneously, nearly 125,000 African American men fought in segregated units in World War II, often being sent on the front guard of the most dangerous missions (Zinn, 2003). For example, the G.I. Bill that provided post-secondary educational benefits to returning veterans did not substantially increase educational attainment for Black men, especially those in the South. There was a limited number of colleges that even admitted Black people, and both African Americans and women still faced discrimination when trying to access their benefits (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2002). While the **life course theory** points to this world war as a process that significantly affected and changed life outcomes in a positive way for men and families, this was certainly more the case for White veterans. Japanese Americans whose families were interned also fought in the segregated units that had the war's highest casualty rates (Odo, 2017; Takaki, 2001).

Civil Rights and Second-Wave Feminism

Following the end of the war, both the women who had worked in high-paying jobs in factories and the African American men who had fought in the war returned to a society that was still deeply segregated, and they were expected to return to their previous subordinate positions. Despite the conservative political climate of the 1950s, civil rights organizers began to challenge both the segregation of Jim Crow laws and the segregation experienced by African Americans on a daily basis. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of 1954, which made "separate but equal" educational facilities illegal, provided an essential legal basis for activism against the institutionalized racism of Jim Crow laws. Eventually, the Black Freedom Movement, also known now as the Civil Rights Movement, would fundamentally change U.S. society and inspire the second-wave feminist movement and the political movements of the New Left (e.g., gay liberationism, Black nationalism, socialist and anarchist activism, the environmentalist movement) in the late 1960s.

In many ways, the second-wave feminist movement was influenced and facilitated by the activist tools provided by the civil rights movement. Drawing on the stories of women who participated in the civil rights movement, they challenged gender norms that kept women in the private sphere of the home and childrearing and not in politics or activism (Debois and Dumenil, 2005). Women who were involved in the civil rights movement became activists in the second-wave feminist movement, and they employed tactics that the civil rights movement had used, including marches and nonviolent direct action. Additionally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 not only prohibited employment discrimination based on race but also sex discrimination.

Although the second-wave feminist movement challenged gendered inequalities and brought women's issues to the forefront of national politics in the late 1960s and 1970s, the movement also reproduced race and sex inequalities. Black women writers and activists such as Alice Walker, bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins developed **Black feminist critiques** of the ways in which second-wave feminists often ignored racism and class oppression and how they uniquely impact women and men of color and working-class people (figure 6.18).



Figure 6.18. Black feminist bell hooks argues that you can't fight sexism without also fighting racism, classism, and homophobia. "bell hooks" by Cmongirl. Public domain.

Black feminist bell hooks (1984) argued that feminism cannot just be a fight to make women equal with men, because such a fight does not acknowledge that all men are not equal in a capitalist, racist, and homophobic society. Thus, hooks and other Black feminists argued that sexism cannot be separated from racism, classism, and homophobia and that these systems of domination overlap and reinforce each other. Therefore, she argued, you cannot fight sexism without fighting racism, classism, and homophobia.

One of the first formal Black feminist organizations was the Combahee River Collective, formed in 1974. The Combahee River Collective Statement was one of the first explorations of multiple oppressions, including heterosexism as well as racism and sexism (Eisenstein, 1978). This is a short excerpt from the statement:

> There is ...[a] realization that comes from the seemingly personal experiences of individual Black women's lives. Black feminists and many more Black women who do not define themselves as feminists have all experienced sexual oppression as a constant factor in our day-to-day existence. As children we realized that we were different from boys and that we were treated differently. For example, we were told in the same breath to be quiet both for the sake of being "ladylike" and to make us less objectionable in the eyes of white people. As we grew older we became aware of the threat of physical and sexual abuse by men. However, we had no way of conceptualizing what was so apparent to us, what we knew was really happening.

The continued focus on the complexity of identities and their intersections provided a foundation for the next wave of social movements.

Third-Wave Feminism and Queer Movements

Third-wave feminism is, in many ways, a hybrid creature. It is influenced by second-wave feminism, Black feminisms, transnational feminisms, Global South feminisms, and queer feminism. This hybrid activism comes directly out of the experiences of feminists in the late 20th and early 21st centuries who have grown up in a world that supposedly does not need social movements. This is because "equal rights" for racial minorities, sexual minorities, and women have been guaranteed by law in most countries. The gap between law and reality—between the abstract proclamations of states and concrete lived experience—however, reveals the necessity of both old and new ways of working outside of the system.

In a country where women are paid only 81% of what men are paid for the same labor, where police violence in Black communities occurs at much higher rates than in other communities, where 58% of transgender people surveyed experienced mistreatment from police officers in the past year, where 40% of homeless youth organizations' clientele are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, where people of color—on average—make less income and have considerably lower amounts of wealth than White people, and where the military is the most funded institution by the government, feminists have increasingly realized that a coalitional politics that organizes with other groups based on their shared (but differing) experiences of oppression, rather than their specific identity, is absolutely necessary (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019; James et al., 2016; Durso & Gates, 2012; Heywood & Drake, 1997; Duggan, 2002).

In the 1980s and 1990s, third-wave feminists took up activism in a number of forms, including a focus on health during the AIDS epidemic, a disease that has now killed tens of millions of people worldwide (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2023). Beginning in the mid-1980s, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) began organizing to press an unwilling U.S. government and medical establishment to develop affordable drugs for people with HIV/AIDS (figure 6.19). In the latter part of the 1980s, a subset of individuals began to articulate **queer politics**, explicitly reclaiming a derogatory term often used against gay men and lesbians and distancing themselves from the gay and lesbian rights movement, which they felt mainly reflected the interests of White, middle-class gay men and lesbians. The queer turn sought to develop more inclusive sexually diverse cultures and communities, which aimed to welcome and support transgender and gender nonconforming people and people of color.



Figure 6.19. The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) began organizing to press an unwilling U.S. government and medical establishment to develop affordable drugs for people with HIV/AIDS. "ACT UP Demonstration at NIH" by NIH History Office. Public domain.

Around the same time as ACT UP was beginning to organize in the mid-1980s, sex-positive feminism came into currency among feminist activists and theorists. Sex-positive feminists argued that sexual liberation within a sex-positive culture that values consent between partners would liberate not only women but also men. Sex-positive feminists argued that no sexual act has an inherent meaning, and that not all sex, or all representations of sex, were inherently degrading to women. In fact, sexual politics and sexual liberation are key sites of struggle for White women, women of color, gay men, lesbians, queers, and transgender people—groups of people who have historically been stigmatized for their sexual identities or sexual practices (Rubin, G. 1984). Therefore, a key aspect of queer and feminist subcultures is to create sex-positive spaces and communities that not only validate sexualities that are often stigmatized in the broader culture but also place sexual consent at the center of sex-positive spaces and communities.

In a media-savvy generation, it is not surprising that cultural production is the main avenue of activism taken by contemporary activists. For example, the Riot Grrrl movement, based in the Pacific Northwest of the United States in the early 1990s, consisted of do-it-yourself bands predominantly composed of women, the creation of independent record labels, feminist zines, and art. Their lyrics often addressed gendered sexual violence, sexual liberationism, heteronormativity, gender normativity, police brutality, and war. Feminist news websites and magazines have also become important sources of feminist analysis on current events and issues. Magazines such as *Bitch* and *Ms*., as well as online blog collectives such as Feministing and the Feminist Wire, function as alternative sources of feminist knowledge production. Creating an alternative culture on people's own terms can be considered a feminist act of resistance as well.

Third-wave feminism's insistence on grappling with multiple points of view, as well as its persistent refusal to be pinned down as representing just one group of people or one perspective, may be its greatest strong point. Similar to how queer activists and theorists have insisted that "queer" is and should be open-ended and never set to mean one thing, third-wave feminism's complexity, nuance, and adaptability become assets in a world marked by rapidly shifting political situations.

Black Lives Matter and Allies

In 2013, prompted by the killing of Trayvon Martin, Alicia Garza wrote a Facebook post, "Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter." Friend Patrisse Cullors added a hashtag to "Black Lives Matter." Opal Tometi suggested that the three Black women create an online presence that became a "container" for the Black protests and work toward "a multiracial democracy that works for all of us" (TIME, 2020). Together, they are credited with starting the Black Lives Matter movement.



Figure 6.20. Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi were interviewed by Mia Birdsong at the TEDWomen Conference 2016, "It's About Time." "TEDWomen2016_20161027_MA016918_1920" by Marla Aufmuth/TED. License: CC BY-NC 2.0.

The year 2020, near the beginning of a global pandemic and prompted by the murder of George Floyd, saw increased activism in Black Lives Matter both among Black people and allies. Nationally, White people have shown an increased understanding of the discrimination and bias that Black people continue to experience. This could be a time of enlightenment, understanding, and rapid change. The authors encourage readers to continue to examine how past and current policies affect the experiences of Black and multiracial families.

One aspect of the current Black Lives Matter movement is the increased involvement of people from other races and ethnicities as **allies**, people who form relationships and advocate with or for others who are marginalized. These can be White people who do not experience racism but work to support and advocate for equity. Often, an ally will come to this position through interactions with a close friend or family member who experiences racism. However, others may not have close experience with people of color. "Listening" to stories, whether through music, the news, novels, or podcasts, is critical to understanding someone else's lived experience. In this podcast, you can hear about one ally, a young Korean American, who surprised himself by speaking up.

https://www.npr.org/2020/07/20/892974604/one-korean-americans-reckoning

Allyship is critical to changing systems of bias, dissemination, and the corresponding privilege that other groups experience. The focus of the story should continue to be on Black individuals who have experienced ongoing systemic harm to their families. They have continued to advocate for understanding of their experience, representation, belonging, and an equal opportunity to participate safely in society and institutions.

Comprehension Self Check

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Licenses and Attributions for Working Outside of the System: Social Movements and Activism

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6.5: Looking Ahead- Looking Back to Martin Luther King Jr.

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Cassie Cruze

People who have experienced marginalization in this country continue to work, raise their families, ensure their children have better lives, and strive toward equity. While there are a multitude of individual, organized, and grassroots efforts that work both outside and inside the representative system, we have looked most closely at the analysis of the feminist movement and the ways it intersects with other needs and activism.

To look ahead, let's look back for a moment. You have likely heard of Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's "I Have Dream" speech delivered in Washington, D.C. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. Maybe you have heard these famous lines:

> I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.
>
> I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."
>
> I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.
>
> I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.
>
> I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

You can read the full text here at the King Institute's website. You can also watch the whole speech in figure 6.21, with subtitles (although there are occasional places where the audio has been lost).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 6.21. Dr Martin Luther King: I Have a Dream [YouTube Video]. It's worthwhile to read and listen to this monumental speech while reflecting on your viewpoint about whether and how the country has progressed and changed since 1963. Transcript. "Dr. Martin Luther King: I Have a Dream Full Speech with English Subtitles" © English Subtitles. License Terms: Standard YouTube License.

As we reflect, we must keep in mind our own social identities. This author, a White person, has not experienced the negative effects of racialization; in fact, I have benefitted from it even when I didn't realize it. So, reflect. A part of that reflection must be the willingness to hear the experiences and viewpoints of those whose social identities put them most at risk for structural and individualized discrimination.

There are many Black leaders who are changing the way that representation is expressed and experienced. Bubba (Darrell) Wallace, a successful National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) driver, made significant headlines by calling on the organization to ban the display of Confederate flags (figure 6.22). Within 48 hours, the flags were banned, and he had his race car painted with a Black Lives Matter theme. This famous athlete used his personal influence combined with the ongoing social movement and the current national focus to address a longtime problematic symbol of oppression.



Figure 6.22. Bubba (Darrell) Wallace Jr. called on NASCAR to ban displays of the Confederate flag. “Darrell Wallace Jr.” by Zach Catanzareti Photo. License: CC BY 2.0.

Senator Kamala Harris, a woman of Black and South Asian (Indian) ancestry, was elected vice president in the national 2020 election (figure 6.23). Her nomination and election highlight her education and work accomplishments, as well as the importance of representation at the national level. The election of one Black leader does not solve the inequities that many people of color experience, but it is one step along the way.



Figure 6.23. Former Senator Kamala Harris was elected vice president in the 2020 election. “At the 2019 Iowa Democrats Hall of Fame Celebration in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on Sunday, June 9” by Lorie Shaull. License: CC BY-NC SA 2.0.

We have looked closely at several ways that representation affects families in the United States. As you continue your education in this class and in the future, pay attention to the ways in which you see representation making a difference and the potential for changes in representation.

In Focus: Being Larger than Circumstances

The image of a bald eagle is important to my family as it reminds us that we need to be larger than the circumstances that surround our lives.



Figure 6.24. The bald eagle is a symbol that represents freedom in the U.S. and its importance to family. “Live Free Coin” by the U.S. Mint. License: Public Domain.

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6.6: Going Deeper

Now that you know more about how representation and belonging can affect families, this page has some resources for you.

First, there is a list of resources that the authors used while writing this chapter but could not fit into the main part of the book. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- The official government census website is continually updated as more data are processed. Check here for the most recent information.
- REVUP (Register, Educate, Vote, Use Your Power) works to increase the voting participation of people with disabilities. If you are interested in REVUP's work, click here.

Reflective Questions

1. Reflect on the significance of representation as it relates to belonging and equity in your own experience.
2. What is the purpose of the census? What are some of the challenges related to counting every person in the United States?
3. What formal processes exist in the United States for the representation of all families? Which of these processes have you or your family participated in?
4. What contributes to some families being represented less frequently in social processes such as voting, being elected, and participating in the census? What are the barriers to participation? What institutional changes could be made to increase participation?
5. How is representation linked with equity?
6. Reflect on the readings and your own experience with social movements, such as the Feminist or the Black Lives Matter movements. How do these movements affect families and society?
7. How are representation and belonging linked? Consider the discussions of belonging in Chapter 5 and in this chapter.
8. What institutional changes to increase participation and equity in social processes would you recommend?

Key Terms

- **Allies:** a person who forms relationships with and advocates with or for others who are marginalized but do not have that marginalized identity themselves.
- **American Community Survey (ACS):** a program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that gathers demographic information annually in the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- **Black feminist critiques:** a body of critical and creative work written by Black women in the United States regarding feminism and how it often ignores racism and class oppression.
- **Disenfranchisement:** the state of being rejected or being deprived of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote.
- **Feminist movement:** a series of social movements and political campaigns for radical and liberal reforms regarding sex and gender equity, women's issues, and sexism.
- **Representation:** the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way.

- **Social movement:** a loosely organized effort by a large group of people to achieve a social goal, such as carrying out change or resisting or undoing the status quo.
- **U.S. Census:** a population census that takes place every 10 years and is legally mandated by the U.S. Constitution.
- **Voter registration:** the process whereby citizens register with election officials in order to become eligible to vote.

Activity: Power and Belonging Analysis

In the first six chapters of this text, you have seen an emphasis on how social identities affect individual and family outcomes. This chapter, in particular, emphasizes how those identities affect our feelings of belonging and being included in society. Watch the 12-minute "Social Identities" video in figure 6.24. This video helps pull together the concepts of social identities, intersectionality, and social location.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 6.25. Social Identities [YouTube Video]. The video's authors use themselves as examples to illustrate how individuals can have social identities that are both privileged and oppressed. Transcript. "Social Identities" by Elizabeth B. Pearce, Kimberly Puttman, and Colin Stapp, and Open Oregon Educational Resources is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Reflection Questions

1. The video's authors describe their internal characteristics, including their motivations, values, and beliefs. How would you describe your own?
2. Describe your understanding of the similarities and differences between race, ethnicity, and culture.
3. The video's authors describe their roles and relationships. How would you describe your own?
4. Pause the video on the Wheel of Power and Privilege (about 9:45) or refer back to figure 6.9. Choose two of the categories on the wheel and analyze where you think you and your family fit on the wheel.

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CHAPTER 7: HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how socially constructed ideas affect health outcomes for families.
2. Describe the advantage of understanding health disparities related to social characteristics (race, gender, etc.) and how it relates to families.
3. Explain why family members with mental illness or substance use disorders are less likely to get medical care and support.
4. Relate the challenges of meeting basic needs like sleep, exercise, and good diet to family health.
5. Describe how definitions of "family" impact the access of any individual to health care.
6. Examine how family structure, geography, and income level overlap affect health care access in the United States.
7. Analyze what contributed to the opioid crisis and its impact on families.
8. Apply theoretical concepts related to family health to one's own observations and experiences.

7.1: Chapter Reading Guide

7.2: The Social Construction of Health

7.3: Health Equity for Families

7.4: Health and Health Insurance

7.5: Looking Ahead- Keeping Your Family Healthy

7.6: Going Deeper

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7.1: Chapter Reading Guide

In this chapter, we'll start with social constructions, which you learned about in Chapter 1. Have you thought about the ways that health is socially constructed? Here you will explore how stigma and intersectionality can affect access to health care, health insurance, and health equity in the United States. This chapter contains topics of practical interest such as the opioid epidemic, the power of sleep, and how social structures can impact personal relationships like intimate relationships.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Health:** the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- **Health disparities:** preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations.
- **Health equity:** equal access to health benefits for all people, regardless of identity.
- **Health insurance:** a type of insurance, paid for by the consumer or another entity, that covers the whole or a part of the risk of a person incurring medical expenses.
- **Mental health:** a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life.
- **Mental illness:** a wide range of mental health disorders that affect your mood, thinking, and behavior.
- **Opioid:** substances that affect the neurons in our brain by blocking pain and providing a feeling of calm and euphoria.
- **Stigma:** a negative or discriminatory attitude toward others related to a specific characteristic or difference, often of a marginalized identity.
- **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:** an international document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that enshrines the rights and freedoms of all human beings.

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7.2: The Social Construction of Health

Amy Huskey and Elizabeth B. Pearce

> "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver."
> —Mahatma Gandhi

Health is the "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity," as defined by the World Health Organization (2005) in its Constitution. The organization goes on to state that families and communities are able to thrive when individuals are able to maintain health. Our employment, finances, mental and emotional functioning, and spiritual lives all interact with our overall health.

The **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights** Article 25 identifies health as a human right:

> 1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
>
> 2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection (United Nations, 1948).

While the status of health is very real, it is also important to examine the aspects of health and illness that are socially constructed. As members of society, we share assumptions about reality that define both health and illness. Illness has a biological component, yet it also embodies an independent element that is experienced by the person and observed by those outside of the illness. Societies construct the idea of "health" differently from place to place and over time. For example, many societies consider health and health care to be a human right that all human beings are entitled to, but this is not universally true (figure 7.1). What is your viewpoint?

The social construction of the idea of family, as discussed in Chapter 1, plays a special role in the health of families in the United States. In all other industrialized countries, health care is considered a human right, and all individuals can access comparable care regardless of family status. But in the United States, health care insurance is accessed through a variety of systems, all of which have age, income, employment status, and family relationships as criteria. How do definitions of "family" impact the access of any individual to health care?



Figure 7.1. Activists around the world continue to strive for universal access to health care. "Chalking the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 2015" by University of Essex. Licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

Social Stigma and Family Health

Society informs the definitions for when an illness can be considered a disability, how eligibility for insurance and medical coverage are determined, what illnesses are perceived as legitimate, when the reality of an illness is questioned, and what illnesses are stigmatized (Griffiths & Keirns, 2015). These social constructs can, in themselves, contribute to differentiation in individual health as well as stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. **Stigma,** the social process whereby individuals who are taken to be different in some way are rejected by the greater society in which they live based on that difference, operates in the world of health, ability, and illness. Sociologist Erving Goffman said, "Stigma is a process by which the reaction of others spoils normal identity." A disease or illness that is stigmatized is one in which there is some societal disapproval or questioning of the integrity of people who have the disease, which can also include medical professionals and the person with the disease stigmatizing themselves (figure 7.2).

In Focus: Families, Health, and Stigma

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 7.2. Stigma – Social and Self [YouTube Video]. The Khan Academy Medicine channel describes the interrelationship among stigma, self, and society in this video. As you watch this video, pay attention to how stigma affects internal family relationships, as well as how families are affected by society. Transcript. "Lung Cancer Awareness" by Steve Thompson/Air Force Medicine. Public domain.

Mental health is a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life.

It deserves a specific mention when it comes to stigma, as society has long considered it to be something that individuals can fix, rather than needing medical attention. Someone struggling with depression that causes weight gain or weight loss due to a lack of appetite or excessive hunger is an example of the relationship between mental health and stigma. Obesity and emaciation are both stigmatized in our culture, while the underlying health condition may be ignored. **Mental illness** is a wide range of mental health disorders that affect your mood, thinking, and behavior. Although we have seen a shift in media about mental illness from known celebrities coming forward, such as Demi Lovato, Chrissy Teigan, Steve Young, and Dan Reynolds, there is still a social stigma against mental illness. When a family member is diagnosed with a physical illness such as cancer or heart disease, we see communities and families coming together. Unfortunately, we rarely see mental illness struggles come to the surface without holding a place of shame or guilt; individuals, families, and communities are often more reluctant to talk and come together in the same way. Figure 7.3 expresses the concern that mental health is often hidden or pushed aside.



Figure 7.3. There continues to be a need to advocate for mental health awareness. “Right on” by LizSpikol. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

When we speak about stigma, we speak of two different types: the social stigma, meaning the prejudiced attitudes others have around mental illness and self-perceived stigma, which is an internalized stigma that the individual who suffers from the mental illness has. Not only may the stigma around mental illness create painful emotions and a sense of invalidation for the individual, but it can also result in a reluctance to seek treatment, social rejection, avoidance, isolation, and direct harm to psychological well-being. Stigma is reinforced by common cultural misconceptions, social stereotypes, popular media representations, the politicization of health care, and even some medical professionals and health care institutions.

There are many socially stigmatized diseases, including HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, substance use disorders, skin conditions, and diseases that are less understood by the medical community, such as autoimmune disorders and chronic fatigue syndrome. Individuals may be less likely to seek treatment when experiencing symptoms of a stigmatized condition. In the United States, **health insurance**, paid for by the consumer or another entity, covers a portion of the risk of a person incurring medical expenses is the norm, rather than universal health care. Insurance creates another layer of bureaucracy, and less understood illnesses and treatments may not be covered by some insurance companies.

Even if a person with a stigmatized disease accesses health care, they may have fewer social supports and greater chances of isolation and discrimination in the health care setting and beyond. Management of a disability because of the deterioration of health due to a stigmatized illness can prove to be a tremendous hardship (Sartorius, 2007). It is important to consider how marginalized groups experience health inequities, including those experienced due to the stigma and prejudices linked with the societal perception of specific illnesses.

In Focus: Lung Cancer and Stigma

In a 2014 report, “Addressing the Stigma of Lung Cancer,” the American Lung Association (ALA) described how stigma can contribute to patients avoiding or delaying care when symptoms are experienced and how they may resist disclosing health information to providers. Patients could also experience fewer social supports, feel more distress related to the disease, experience additional conflicts in relationships, and receive lower-quality health care. The report then explained how the stigmas around lung cancer related to lung cancer being hard to detect early, being seen as a death sentence with little hope for survival, and being labeled “a smoker’s disease.” This could contribute to society’s feeling that people with lung cancer are to blame for their disease and ought to feel ashamed.

According to the ALA survey, the public lacked knowledge regarding the prevalence and mortality of lung cancer, as well as knowledge about the funding levels for research. Responders also lacked knowledge of factors other than smoking that contributed to the development of lung cancer, such as genetics and occupational or environmental exposures. Lack of knowledge could play an important role in perpetuating some of the negative associations with and assumptions related to lung cancer (figure 7.4).

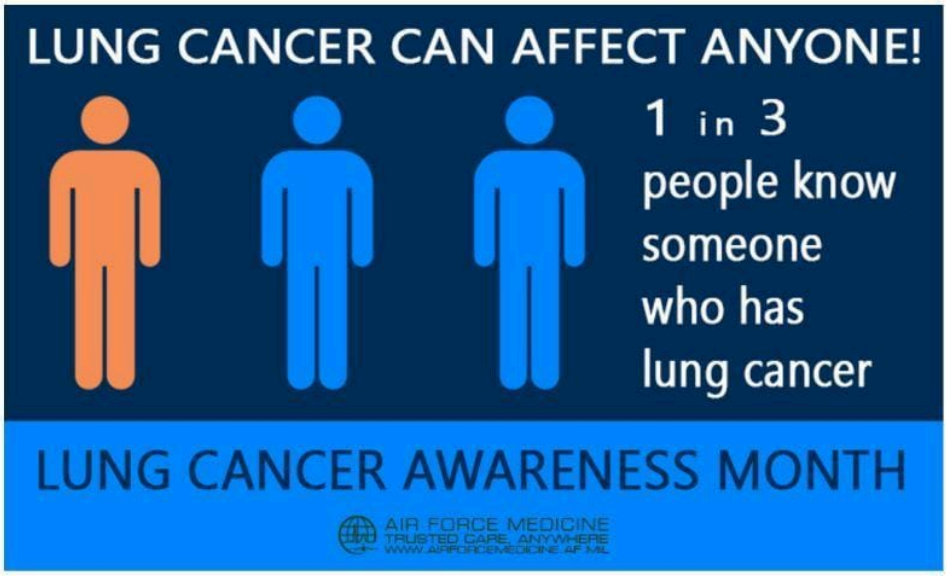


Figure 7.4. This graphic, created by the Air Force Medicine Facebook group, raises awareness about the commonality of lung cancer, which can help reduce stigma related to the disease. "Stigma – Social and Self | Individuals and Society | MCAT" by Khan Academy and AAMC. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0.

Lung cancer stigma has real consequences. People with lung cancer may hide their condition and experience anxiety and depression. They may believe that health care providers are judgmental and biased toward them. Research, advocacy, and public policy are also dimensions in which stigma can have negative consequences for advancing progress toward the treatment of this disease. For instance, lung cancer kills far more people than any other cancer type and contributes to over 25% of all cancer deaths per year (American Cancer Society, 2020). Yet, a study of nonprofit research funding by cancer type determined that lung cancer ranked fourth in its level of funding and is underfunded in relation to its burden on society (Kamath et al., 2019). Not only are funding levels influenced by stigma, but celebrities, community leaders, and volunteers may be less likely to lend their names or volunteer their time due to negative associations with this disease (American Lung Association, 2014).

After reading this, you may want to reflect on or discuss these questions:

- Notice if you blame or hold people more responsible knowing that they have lung cancer than if they have another cancer such as breast or prostate cancer.
- What effects could stigma itself have on people who are sick and the health care that they receive?
- Is the stigmatization of lung cancer a social problem? Or a personal problem?

Structural Power and Family Health

One's status in society, or structural power, can complicate the experience of social stigma related to medical conditions. For example, cisgender men hold more power in the United States than women or people outside the gender binary. What role does that play in the diagnosis of real health concerns and the social construction of those concerns?

We know that, overwhelmingly, men are the subjects of the majority of medical studies and research. That affects what is thought of as "typical" or "normal." Women have more often been told that their symptoms are "all in your head" or related to "female troubles." While this is less common than in the past, it likely continues to play a part in the misdiagnosis of serious illness in women and people with nonbinary gender identities. We also know that women experience diseases such as chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia in much higher numbers than men. The medical community describes these syndromes in overly broad terms that make diagnosis difficult. We must ask ourselves: How do these multiple complex factors serve to continue to reinforce the existing power dynamic in the United States? What systemic changes in health care would reduce this inequity?

In Focus: The Overlapping Demands of Work, Family, and COVID-19 Testing

Carmen Quinero, a 35-year-old essential worker who works at a distribution center that ships N95 masks in California, developed

a severe cough in late March 2020. Her workplace's human resources department told her to stay home until she was tested for the virus. Quinero has health insurance coverage through her employer, but she has a $3,500 deductible.

Tests were not widely available in March 2020, so she was directed by her doctor to go to an emergency room. She went to the closest one, a for-profit hospital owned by Universal Health Services, one of the largest health care management companies in the United States. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) had passed the week before, and it had been widely publicized that coronavirus testing and treatment would be free to individuals and covered by the federal government.

Unfortunately, the legislation was full of loopholes, including for people like Quinero who needed a test but were unable to get one due to the low supplies. Although she was given a chest x-ray and prescribed an inhaler, she was not tested. That means that not only was she responsible for the $1,840 in hospital and doctor fees, but she had to miss a week of work (mostly unpaid), putting a considerable financial strain on Quinero and her family.

Quinero's case is not isolated and is not specific to the coronavirus. Access to and coverage for the test for COVID-19 illustrates how the patchwork of insurance, government programs and laws, and private payments inequitably affect lower-income people, whether or not they have health insurance coverage.

If you want to hear more about Carmen's story, listen to this 4-minute recording from the NPR-KFF series Bill of the Month.

In this chapter, we will examine the overall health of families in the United States, with attention to comparisons among families' experiences with health, illness, injury, and diseases, as well as comparisons with other countries. We will describe the daily life factors and resources that affect health, including the effects of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination. We will look closely at how families access health care services, including the health care insurance system. We will discuss the question of health care as a human right.

Every time an individual is considered part of a marginalized group, including illness status, it intensifies the effects of discrimination and resulting **health disparities**, which are preventable differences in the burden of disease that are experienced by those groups. Considering disparities and social stigma provides a way of thinking about the social construction of illness. Someone from the LGBTQIA+ community, for instance, already faces challenges in finding health care providers who are culturally competent and have knowledge of LGBTQIA+ health (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, n.d.). If they are also dealing with a stigmatized illness, then they have multiple obstacles that stand in the way of them receiving quality health care.

One could also examine how socioeconomic status (SES) may further complicate this scenario by realizing that people living in poverty are more likely to have no health insurance, therefore restricting access even more (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Even geographical location, like living in a rural area or in the Southern portion of the United States, will reduce accessibility to health care (Warshaw, 2017).

Institutionalized inequities have been amplified during the coronavirus pandemic, as illustrated in figure 7.5. Some of the factors that contribute to greater numbers of Black, Indigenous, and Latinx families being affected by the COVID-10 virus include the following (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020):

- Crowded work environments such as meat-packing facilities
- Food deserts
- Less health insurance
- Less access to health care and virus testing as measured by geography and transportation options
- Greater likelihood of experiencing discrimination, stress, and lack of sleep

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 7.5. Watch the first 5.5 minutes of the video Aletha Maybank, MD, MPH, Discusses COVID-19 and Health Equity [YouTube Video]. This video from the American Medical Association features an interview with Doctor Aletha Maybank. It explains how funding, data collection, and the overlap with structural discrimination affect the rates of the virus. Transcript. "COVID-19 Update for April 21, 2020" © American Medical Association. License: Standard YouTube License.

In Chapter 4, we illustrated the **ecological systems theory**. When families are viewed as a system, it is easy to imagine how health challenges of one family member impact the whole family. Imagine that a parent of young children is sick and can't care for their children. In addition, what if they lack health insurance or have to take two buses to get to their doctor's office? Not only is the parent unable to care for their children, but they must also weigh whether to try to see a doctor, how to provide childcare, and how to pay for the visit. As you read this chapter, consider how each of the health challenges described may affect a family system, as well as the surrounding societal functions.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=909#h5p-31

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"In Focus: Lung Cancer and Stigma" adapted by Elizabeth B. Pearce from "Health and Medicine" in Introduction to Sociology 2e.

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7.3: Health Equity for Families

Elizabeth B. Pearce; Audrey Nomvula Moyo; Jessica N. Hampton; Hannah Morelos; and Amy Huskey

Health in the United States is a complex topic. As one of the wealthiest nations, **health equity**—equal access to health benefits for all people, regardless of identity—could be within reach. The United States, however, fares well in some health comparisons with the rest of the world and badly in others. For example, postoperative complications are less common in the United States than in comparable countries. And, as figure 7.6 shows, mortality rates for several cancers are lower. First, let's look at how the United States compares overall to other countries.

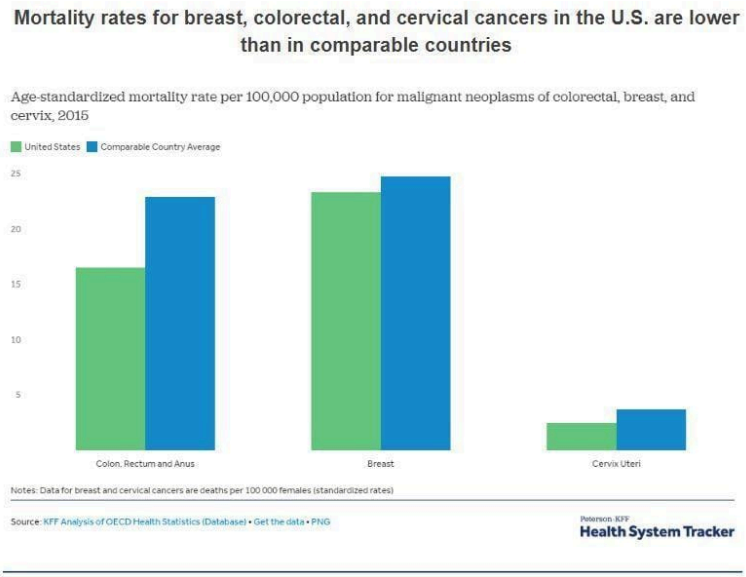


Figure 7.6. The United States typically performs better in both mortality (death) rates and five-year survival rates for breast cancer. In 2015, the mortality rate for breast and cervical cancers in the United States was slightly lower than the comparable country average. For colorectal cancers, the U.S. mortality rate is also lower, with 16.5 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to 22.9 per 100,000 in similar countries. "Mortality Rates for Breast and Colorectal Cancer in the United States Are Lower than in Comparable Countries" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

The overall comparative picture is more grim. The United States spends a great deal more public, private, and out-of-pocket funds per capita on health care but also lags behind almost every industrialized country in terms of providing basic health and health care to all of its citizens (figures 7.7, 7.8, and 7.9) (Tikkanen & Abrams, 2020).

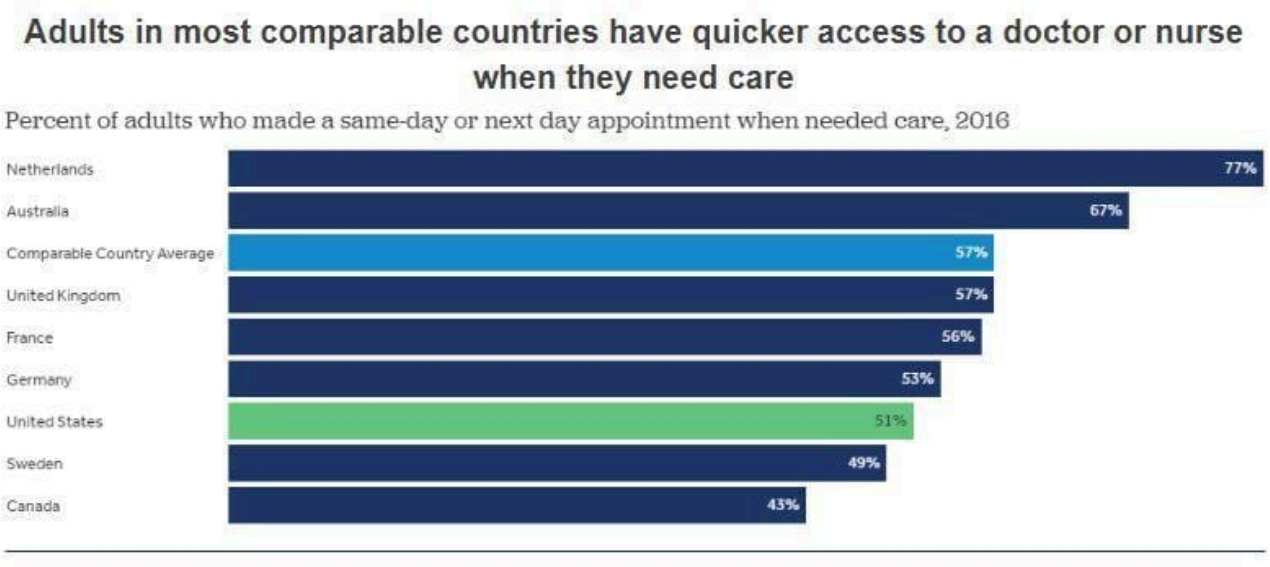


Figure 7.7 With the exception of Canada and Sweden, patients in the United States have a harder time making same-day appointments when in need of care. "Percent of Adults Who Made a Same-Day or Next-Day Appointment when Needed Care, 2016" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

In 2016, 51% of patients in the United States were able to make a same-day appointment with a provider, compared to 57% of patients in similar countries. In other words, you are more likely to have to stay home, miss work or social activities, and be sick longer in the United States compared to someone in other countries, who also spend less on health care than we do in the United States.

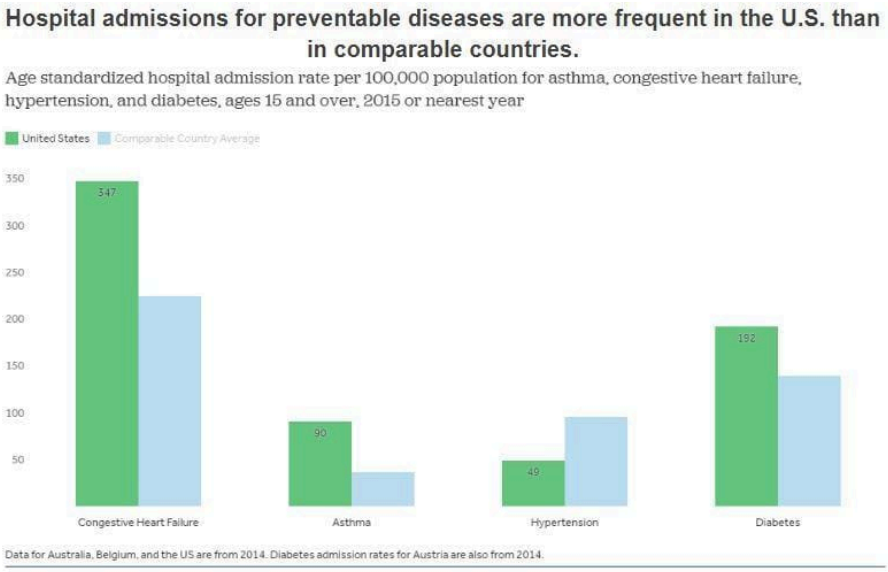


Figure 7.8. Hospital admissions for certain chronic diseases like circulatory conditions, asthma, and diabetes can arise when prevention services are not being delivered. "Age-Sex Standardized Hospital Admission Rate per 100,000 Population for Asthma, Congestive Heart Failure, Hypertension, and Diabetes, Ages 15 and over, 2016 or nearest Year" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

Hospital admission rates in the United States are higher than in comparable countries for congestive heart failure, asthma, and complications due to diabetes. However, the United States has lower rates of hospitalization for hypertension than comparably wealthy countries do on average. Why is it that hypertension receives more attention in the United States than other diseases? In total, across these four disease categories, the United States has a 37% higher rate of hospital admissions than the average of other countries.

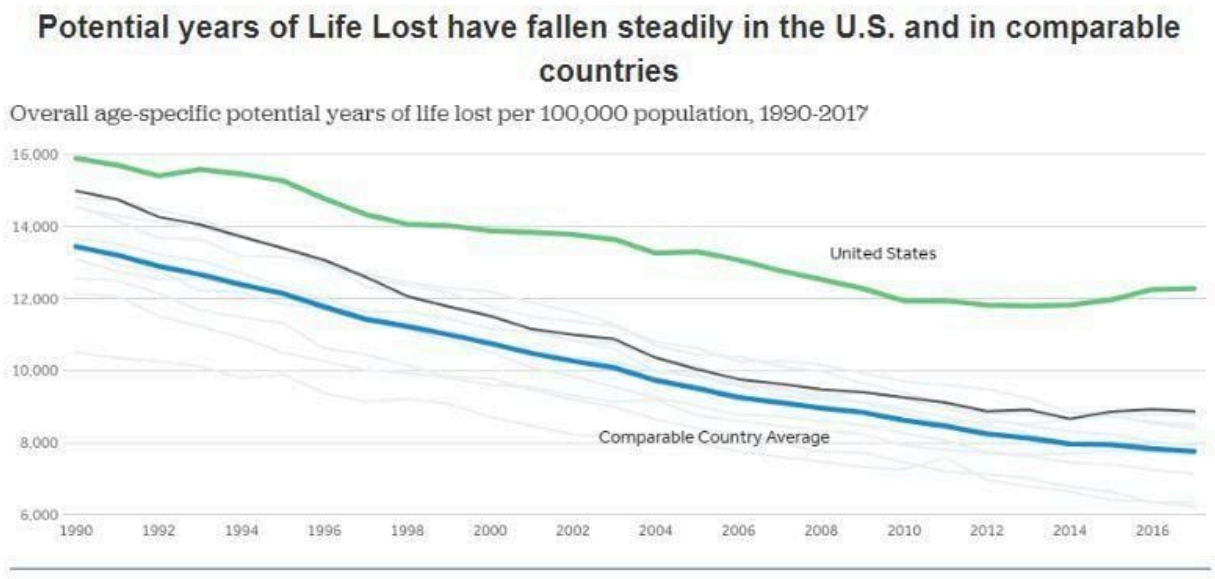


Figure 7.9. Premature deaths are measured in "years of life lost," which is an alternative to the overall mortality rate. It is measured by adding together the total number of years that people who died before a specified age (e.g., 70) would have lived if they had lived to that age. You can see that the United States continues to trail other countries in this measure. "Potential Years of Life Lost Have Fallen Steadily in the United States and in Comparable OECD Countries" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

For example, a person who dies at age 45 would have a "years of life lost" (YLL) value of 25. The United States and comparable countries have made progress in reducing YLLs over the last 25 years (down 23% and 42%, respectively), although the United States continues to trail comparable countries by a significant margin (12,282 versus 7,764 YLLs in 2017).

But these charts do not tell the entire story. The overall averages of health only compare the rates in the United States to the rates in other countries. Within the United States, groups are affected disproportionately in terms of access to health and health outcomes. These disparities are described next.

Social Determinants of Health and Disparities

Family and individual health is affected by the environments in which people live, work, learn, and play, the non-medical factors that affect health outcomes, or **social determinants of health** (World Health Organization). Social engagement and access to resources, safety, and security are all impacted by the settings where families spend their time. Simply put, place matters when it comes to health.

Health disparities are the preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008). These populations can be defined by factors such as race or ethnicity, gender, education or income, disability, geographic location (e.g., rural or urban), or sexual orientation.

Health disparities result from multiple factors, including:

- Poverty
- Environmental threats
- Inadequate access to health care
- Individual and behavioral factors
- Educational inequalities

Health disparities are related to inequities in education. Dropping out of school is associated with multiple social and health problems (McCarty et al., 2008; Ellickson et al., 1997). Overall, individuals with less education are more likely to experience a number of health risks, such as obesity, substance use disorders, and intentional and unintentional injury, compared with individuals with more education (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). Higher levels of education are associated with a longer life and an increased likelihood of obtaining or understanding basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (Liao et al., 1999; Jemal et al., 2008; Breese et al., 2007).

At the same time, good health is associated with academic success. Higher levels of protective health behaviors and lower levels of health risk behaviors have been associated with higher academic grades among high school students (Rasberry et al., 2017). Health risks such as teenage pregnancy, poor dietary choices, inadequate physical activity, physical and emotional abuse, substance use disorders, and gang involvement have a significant impact on how well students perform in school (Choi, 2007; Shore et al., 2008; Valois et al., 2002; Chomitz et al., 2009; Field et al., 2001).

Health by Race and Ethnicity

When studying health and disease in the United States, it is hard to miss the disparities among races. In 2018, the average life expectancy for Black males was 74.7 years. The average life expectancy for White males was 78.5 years. This is a gap of almost five years (Wamsley, 2021). Mortality measures how many people die at a particular time or place. Many families have experienced the tragedy of losing an infant, and it can be hard to talk about. We see similar disparities when we look at how many babies die or infant mortality. The 2018 infant mortality rates for different races and ethnicities are shown in figure 7.10.

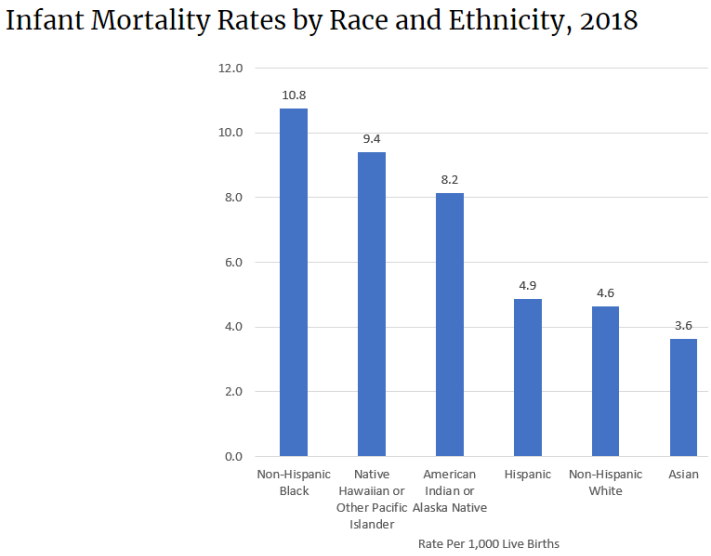


Figure 7.10. Infant mortality varies significantly by race and ethnicity. How might applying the social determinants of health model help us to understand why? Image description. "Infant Mortality by Race and Ethnicity, 2018" by the Centers for Disease Control. Public domain.

According to a report from the Kaiser Family Foundation, Black Americans also have a higher incidence of several other diseases and causes of mortality, from cancer to heart disease to diabetes (James et al., 2007). Mexican Americans and Native Americans also have higher rates of these diseases and causes of mortality than White people

Lisa Berkman (2009) notes that this gap started to narrow during the civil rights movement in the 1960s, but it began widening again in the early 1980s. What accounts for these perpetual disparities in health among different ethnic groups? Much of the answer lies in the level of health care that these groups receive. Even after adjusting for insurance differences, marginalized racial and ethnic groups racial and ethnic minority groups receive poorer quality of care and less access to care than dominant groups (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2010). Racial inequalities in care include:

1. Black Americans, Native Americans, and Alaskan Natives received inferior care than White Americans for about 40% of measures.
2. Asian ethnicities received inferior care for about 20% of measures.
3. Among Whites, Hispanic Whites received 60% inferior care of measures compared to non-Hispanic Whites.

Although there are multiple, complex reasons for discrepancies in care, a simple illustration may help make the point. Medical professionals and public health workers are asking why Black and Brown people are more likely to die of COVID-19. One medical study examined the pulse oximetry measurements of Black and White people in the hospital. If you've been to the hospital, you likely have had to put your finger into a little device that tells the medical professionals how much oxygen is in your blood. That's oximetry. The study's authors examined how often these measurements were accurate for White and Black patients.

They found that Black patients were three times more likely than White patients to have shortages of oxygen in the blood that the

monitor didn't pick up. Because COVID-19 mainly attacks the lungs and reduces oxygen, the discrepancies in the measurements of this device may lead to more medical complications in Black patients (Sjoding et al., 2021). In addition, blood oxygenation levels are part of complex automated medical alerts. If the measurements are wrong, they do not trigger the alerts that notify medical professionals to respond. Therefore, the related levels of care are lower and less effective for Black patients, which may not trigger these alerts and higher levels of care for Black patients. To learn more, you can watch the video "Investigating Claims that Oximeters Give Inaccurate Readings to Patients with Darker Skin."

Health by Socioeconomic Status

Discussions of health by race and ethnicity often overlap with discussions of health by SES, as the two concepts are intertwined in the United States. As the Agency for Health Research and Quality (2010) notes, "racial and ethnic minorities are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be poor or near poor," so many of the data pertaining to marginalized groups are also likely to be pertinent to low socioeconomic groups. Marilyn Winkleby et al. (1992) state that "one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of a person's morbidity [incidence of disease] and mortality experience is that person's SES. This finding persists across all diseases with few exceptions, continues throughout the entire lifespan, and extends across numerous risk factors for disease."

Remember that economics are only part of the SES picture; research suggests that education also plays an important role. Many diseases with a behavioral component, like lung cancer from smoking, coronary artery disease from poor eating and exercise habits, and AIDS, occur disproportionately in families with lower education levels and SES status (Phelan & Link, 2003).

Social class also influences how likely you are to have health insurance. Particularly in the United States, where health care is not universal, the poorer you are, the less likely you are to have quality health insurance. Suppose you have a full-time, beneficial managerial job in a large multinational corporation. In that case, you will likely receive paid time off, excellent health insurance, long-term care insurance, and contributions to your retirement. This package of benefits helps you to prevent disease and stay healthy.

Conversely, suppose you have a low-wage seasonal job, particularly in a state that doesn't participate in the Affordable Care Act. In that case, neither your employer nor the government provides health care insurance for you. You pay for your health care out of your own pocket. Given the high cost of care, you will likely delay getting treatment, not have access to preventive care, or not be able to pay for complex treatment. In the United States, economics, insurance, and health outcomes are linked in enormously inequitable ways.

Health by Gender and Sexual Identity

Gender identity and sexual orientation may also impact how a person experiences health and illness. However, understanding these unequal experiences based on sociological data is challenging. Because it has been illegal to be queer or transgender until recently in the United States, many people do not disclose their unique identities. The agencies that collect data about gender identity and sexual orientation have only recently begun to retool their data collection methods so that people can report their gender identity or sexual orientation. Despite these limitations, though, we notice inequality.

For example, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention examined risk factors for COVID-19 illness or death, they found that gay, lesbian, and bisexual people had challenging underlying health conditions more often than straight people. The report points primarily to economic causes as a core cause of the difference, indicating that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, particularly if they are Black or Brown, experience less economic stability (Heslin & Hall, 2021).

Women are affected adversely both by unequal access to health care and institutionalized sexism in the health care industry. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, women experienced a decline in their ability to see needed specialists between 2001 and 2008. In 2008, one-quarter of females questioned the quality of their health care (Ranji & Salganico, 2011). In this report, we also see the explanatory value of understanding **intersectionality** and intersection theory. Further examination of the lack of confidence in the health care system by women, as identified in the Kaiser study, found that low-income women were more likely (32% compared to 23%) to express concerns about health care quality, illustrating the multiple layers of disadvantage caused by SES and sex.

We can see an example of institutionalized sexism in the way that women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with certain kinds of mental disorders. Psychologist Dana Becker (n.d.) notes that 75% of all diagnoses of borderline personality disorder are for women, according to the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. This diagnosis is characterized by instability of

identity, mood, and behavior, and Becker argues that it has been used as a catch-all diagnosis for too many women. She further criticizes the pejorative connotation of the diagnosis, saying that these pejorative connotations cause people in and outside of the profession of psychotherapy to be biased against women who have been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder.

Many critics also point to the medicalization of women's issues as an example of institutionalized sexism. Medicalization refers to the process by which previously normal aspects of life are redefined as deviant and needing medical attention to remedy. Historically and contemporarily, many aspects of women's lives have been medicalized, including menstruation, premenstrual syndrome, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause.

The medicalization of pregnancy and childbirth has been particularly contentious in recent decades, with many women opting against the medical process and choosing a more natural childbirth. Fox and Worts (1999) find that all women experience pain and anxiety during the birth process but that social support relieves both as effectively as medical support. In other words, medical interventions are no more effective than social ones at helping with the difficulties of pain and childbirth. Fox and Worts further found that women with supportive partners ended up with less medical intervention and fewer cases of postpartum depression. Of course, access to quality birth care outside the standard medical models may not be readily available to women of all social classes.

Interrelationship of Mental and Physical Health

Mental and physical health have been viewed in the Western world as separate, with mental disorders being stigmatized. Often, mental illnesses such as depression or anxiety have been seen as a personal problem that a person should and could "get over" as opposed to a physical ailment such as a sprained ankle or strep throat that merits medical attention and assistance. Even physical illnesses such as fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome, which are experienced by many more women than men, can be seen as "in the patient's head," leading medical professionals to the potential of missing physical illnesses that need medical intervention. This leaves the patient with not only the physical symptoms but also a potential lack of understanding among peers, family members, medical professionals, and co-workers.

Eastern and Indigenous cultures have long seen the connection between the mind and body, and indeed, this connection is better understood than in the United States and other Western countries, where dualism (the separation of the mind/spirit from the body) prevails. Cancer, heart, and respiratory disease death rates are all higher in people with mental illness. In addition, it is better understood how physical lifestyle choices such as exercise, diet, and drug use affect mental health and vice versa (Mental Health Foundation, 2020).

Health Insurance Coverage and Legislation

Like all other health care in the United States, access to mental health care is highly dependent on access to medical insurance. However, because the need for mental health support is not validated as fully as the need for physical health support, insurance companies and government programs have frequently excluded or limited mental health coverage. This is an example of institutionalized or structural stigma.

This practice has been changed through two major acts of legislation: the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) passed in 2008 and The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or Obamacare, passed by the 111th Congress and signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2010.

In 2008, federal lawmakers passed MHPAEA, which created an equity requirement for insurance providers who covered mental health services; those services must be equivalent to the physical health coverage provided. It did not, however, require providers to provide mental health care coverage. So benefits, expenses, and limits requirements were allowed to vary from state to state along with whatever insurance plan individuals could access. It was still the case that insurance holders did not have access to mental health treatment. In 2013, 61% of insured people had access to mental health services, and 54% of the insured had access to addiction treatment (Health Pocket, 2013).

The passage of the ACA reduced the inequities in access to mental health and addiction treatment in two fundamental ways. First, it eliminated health insurance companies' ability to deny coverage based on pre-existing conditions. That gave consumers diagnosed with any mental or physical illness greater choice and more financial leverage when selecting an insurance company. In addition, it required insurance providers to include ten essential benefits, including "services for those suffering from mental health disorders and problems with substance abuse."

While these improvements in the equitability of mental health and addiction access are notable, they apply only to families who have access to certain kinds of health insurance and not universally to all families in the United States. Structural stigma intersects with systemic racism, sexism, and classism.

Sleep, Discrimination, and Intersectionality

Let's focus on how these various disparities overlap with everyday behavior. A biological need that is fundamental to human health is sleep, yet the medical community still has much to understand and learn about its exact mechanisms. Sleep is a vital part of our daily routine, and we spend about one-third of our time doing it. Quality sleep and getting enough of it at the right times is as essential to survival as food and water. In rats, death results from no sleep at 32 days (Palmer, 2009). Research has not observed human death as a result of prolonged sleep deprivation, but paranoia and hallucinations can begin happening in as little as 24 hours without sleep (Walters et al., 2008).

Consider the effects on you and your family when someone goes without enough sleep. Can you think clearly enough to organize your daily tasks? Complete your studies? Help your child figure out their homework problems. Do you provide the same attention and patience with your partner or in other relationships? Without sleep, it's harder to concentrate and respond quickly. Sleep is important to a number of brain functions, including maintaining the pathways in your brain that let you learn and create new memories and getting nerve cells to communicate with each other. In fact, our brains and bodies stay remarkably active while we sleep. Recent findings suggest that sleep plays a housekeeping role in removing toxins in our brains that build up when we are awake.

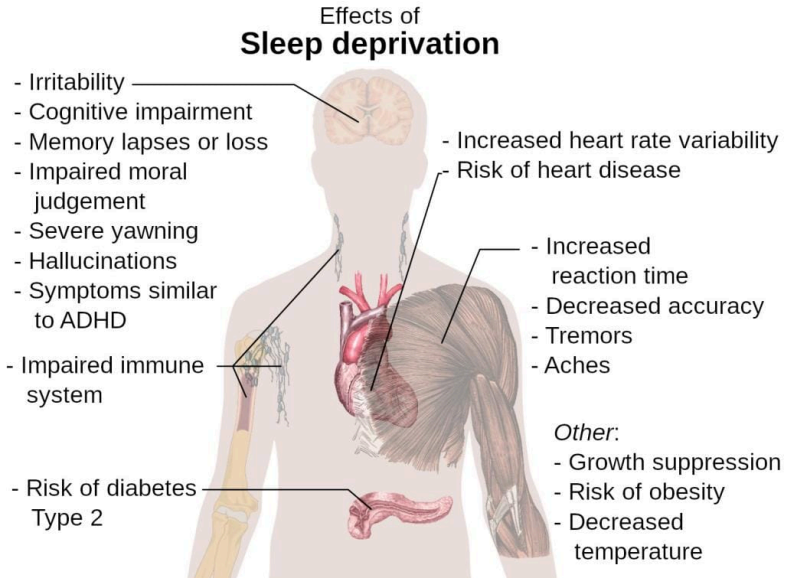


Figure 7.11. Sleep deprivation has much graver consequences than simply feeling tired. "Effects of Sleep deprivation" by Häggström, Mikael (2014). "Medical gallery of Mikael Häggström 2014". WikiJournal of Medicine 1 (2). DOI:10.15347/wjm/2014.008. ISSN 2002-4436. Public Domain.

Sleep affects almost every type of tissue and system in the body, from the brain, heart, and lungs to metabolism, immune function, mood, and disease resistance. Research shows that a chronic lack of sleep, or getting poor quality sleep, increases the risk of disorders, including high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity. All of these conditions, shown in figure 7.11, would likely have a noticeable effect on multiple dimensions of family life and how it impacts the well-being of a family as a whole.

If you would like to learn some more surprising and specific health effects of sleep and apply what you have learned about the superpowers of sleep, participate in the Sleep is a Superpower activity In the "Going Deeper" section.

A 2010 study examined whether there were disparities in sleep quality based on poverty and race/ethnicity. They found that a "sleep disparity" did exist in the study population, and poor sleep quality was strongly associated with poverty and race. Factors such as employment, education, and health status, among others, significantly mediated this effect in participants experiencing poverty. The literature linking sleep and health continues to grow. This study illustrated how poor health is associated with an almost 4-fold increased likelihood of poor sleep. It is important to note that the relationship between health and sleep quality is

likely bidirectional and/or parallel: sleep can influence health and vice versa (Patel et al., 2010). The CDC collects data related to sleep, and in figures 7.12 and 7.13, you can see how race, ethnicity, and geographic location are correlated with how much sleep adults get.

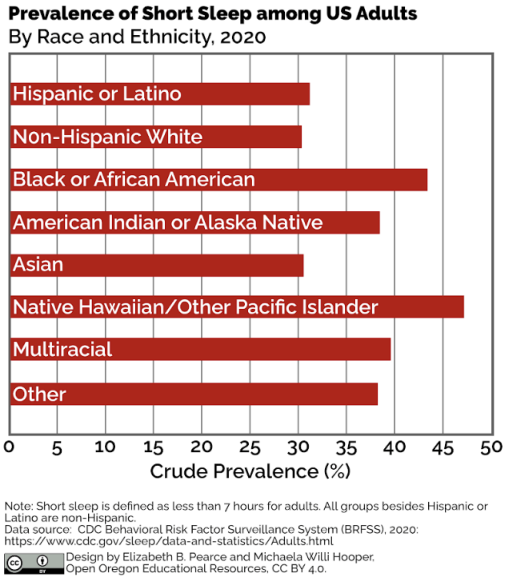


Figure 7.12. Data collected by the CDC between 2013 and 2020, showed the correlation between race, ethnicity, and sleep duration. Asian people and non-Hispanic White people had the fewest instances of short sleep duration. Image description. "Prevalence of Short Sleep Duration Among US Adults by Race and Ethnicity, 2020" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on data from CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2020.

Discrimination, and especially intersectional discrimination, appears to influence sleep, mental, and physical health. The relationship between discrimination and poorer mental and physical health has been established among populations such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and members of LGBTQ+ groups. For instance, discrimination can harm well-being, increase distress and mental illness symptoms, elevate risk for a wide variety of physical illnesses and conditions, and undermine general indicators of health (Brown et al., 2018; Schmitt et al., 2014).

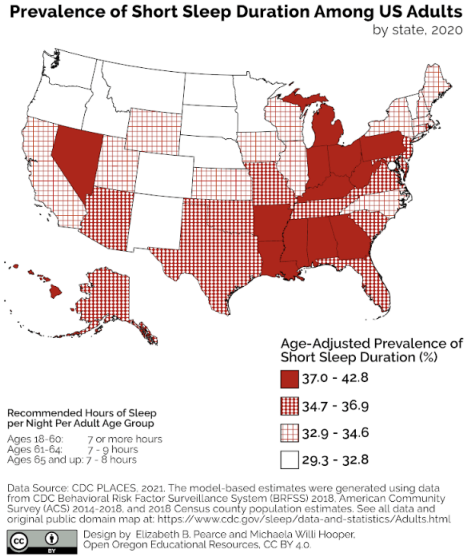


Figure 7.13. Between 29% and 43% of the U.S. adult population gets less sleep than they need. States that have the darkest red shading have the most instances of sleep deprivation, whereas states that have the lightest white shading have the fewest amounts of adults who have sleep deprivation. Image description. "Prevalence of Short Sleep Duration Among US Adults by State, 2020" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2018, American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018, and 2018 Census county population estimates. See all data and original public domain map.

The age-adjusted prevalence of adults who reported short sleep duration varied by county in 2018, ranging from 25.6% in Summit County, Utah, to 49.1% in McCreary County, Kentucky. In other words, the map which shows sleep deprivation by state does not tell the whole story. If you are interested in seeing more detailed information, explore the CDC county-by county map and click here for an image description of the map.

Consider also the ways that low-income and marginalized kinship groups inhabit less-desirable neighborhoods. The map in figure 7.13 shows that geography matters. The overlap of all social determinants of health, including feeling safe and secure, is likely to impact sleep—and then lack of sleep impacts familial relationships. Lack of sleep and less functionality during the daytime have been identified as integral aspects of the cycle of discrimination, stress, and overall mental and physical health (Hisler & Brenner, 2019).

Obesity

A social problem is characterized by affecting many people, threatening the health and welfare of society, recognized as a problem by many people, with multiple causes and effects, and also requiring a systemic solution. Among many social problems faced by this country is obesity, which affects many Americans directly and indirectly. Obesity affects children and adults but is most prevalent in non-Hispanic Black adults, as shown in figure 7.14 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).

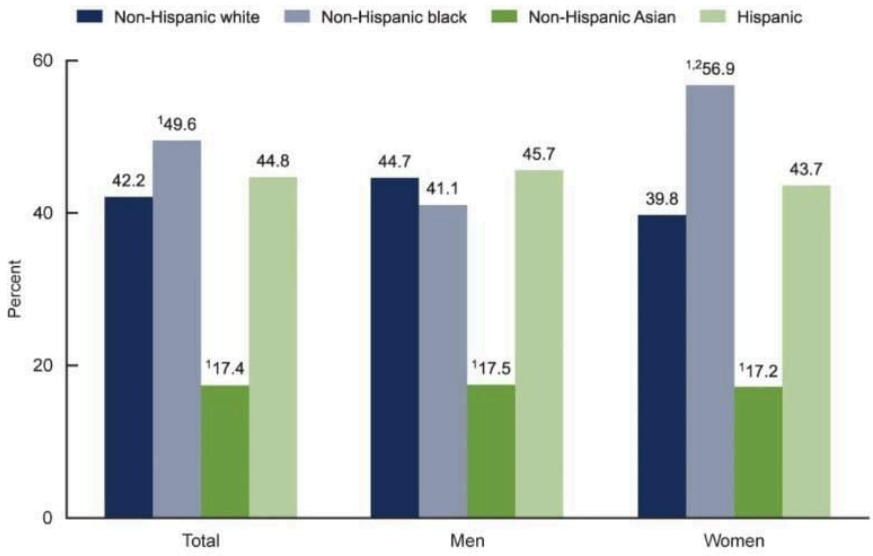


Figure 7.14. This chart shows the prevalence of obesity among adults ages 20 and over by sex, race, and Hispanic origin in the United States from 2017 to 2018. Age-adjusted External link prevalence of obesity among adults ages 20 and over, by sex, race, and Hispanic origin: United States, 2017–2018 by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Public Domain.

It is clear from figure 7.14 that obesity is most prevalent in non-Hispanic Black people, with the highest level of 49.6%. It translates to one in every two non-Hispanic Black adults suffering from obesity, women more than men. But it is difficult to separate this data from the intersection of “isms” that Black women have faced and continue to face: racism, sexism, and classism (Awad et al., 2015).

The National Institute of Health states that when an individual’s weight is higher than the average weight at a given height, they are said to be overweight or suffering from obesity (Ogden, 2018). Being overweight or obese makes it more likely to be prone to a wide range of other illnesses, such as type-2 diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, which are life-threatening. It is tricky to pinpoint what causes obesity as many factors contribute to including several personal conditions and behaviors:

- Genetics that predispose a person toward obesity
- Medication
- Medical conditions
- Diet

How do these personal conditions and behaviors relate to societal conditions? In order to solve a social problem we must understand the ways that social structures create conditions for the problem.

Some of the social conditions that contribute to the obesity epidemic include:

- Food deserts
- Subsidized crops (predominantly those discussed earlier)
- Lack of access to the outdoors
- Lack of places to exercise
- SES
- Stigma related to being overweight

In February 2023, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released updated guidelines for evaluating and treating children and adolescents with obesity, the first update in over 15 years. They advocate for more intensive treatment options, including therapy, medication, and surgery, earlier in life. They advise pediatricians to "offer treatment options early and at the highest available intensity" (Hampl et al., 2023). If obesity is untreated, it is associated with a wide range of health problems, including heart disease and diabetes. The AAP guidelines call for a "whole child" approach, acknowledging that obesity has complex causes, including genetics and SES, rather than personal behaviors and choices. They emphasize communication that is non-stigmatizing and supportive.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=911#h5p-32

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7.4: Health and Health Insurance

Elizabeth B. Pearce; Jessica N. Hampton; and Christopher Byers

Industrialized nations throughout the world, with the notable exception of the United States, provide their citizens with some form of national health care and national health insurance (Russell, 2018). Although their health care systems differ in several respects, their governments pay all or most of the costs for health care, drugs, and other health needs. In Denmark, for example, the government provides free medical care and hospitalization for the entire population and pays for some medications and some dental care. In France, the government pays for some of the medical, hospitalization, and medication costs for most people and all these expenses for people who are low-income, unemployed, or have children under the age of ten. In Great Britain, the National Health Service pays most medical costs for the population, including medical care, hospitalization, prescriptions, dental care, and eyeglasses. In Canada, the national health insurance system also pays for most medical costs. Patients do not even receive bills from their physicians, who instead are paid by the government. Medical debt and bankruptcy due to accidents or disease is a uniquely American problem.

These national health insurance programs are commonly credited with reducing infant mortality, extending life expectancy, and, more generally, for enabling their citizens to have relatively good health. Notably, the United States ranks 33 out of 36 countries who belong to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development for infant mortality. The infant mortality rate in the United States is 5.9 deaths per 1,000 live infant births, as compared to the average rate of 3.9 deaths per 1,000 births. Five countries have death rates lower than 2 per 1,000 births. Their populations are generally healthier than Americans, even though health care spending is much higher per capita in the United States than in these other nations. In all these respects, these national health insurance systems offer several advantages over the health care model found in the United States (Reid, 2010).

The Role of Health Insurance in the United States

Medicine in the United States is big business. Expenditures for health care, health research, and other health items and services have risen sharply in recent decades, having increased tenfold since 1980, as shown in figure 7.15, and now cost the nation more than $2.6 trillion annually. This translates to the largest figure per capita in the industrial world. Despite this expenditure, the United States lags behind many other industrialized nations in several important health indicators.

U.S. Health Care Expenditure, 1980–2010 (in Billions of Dollars)

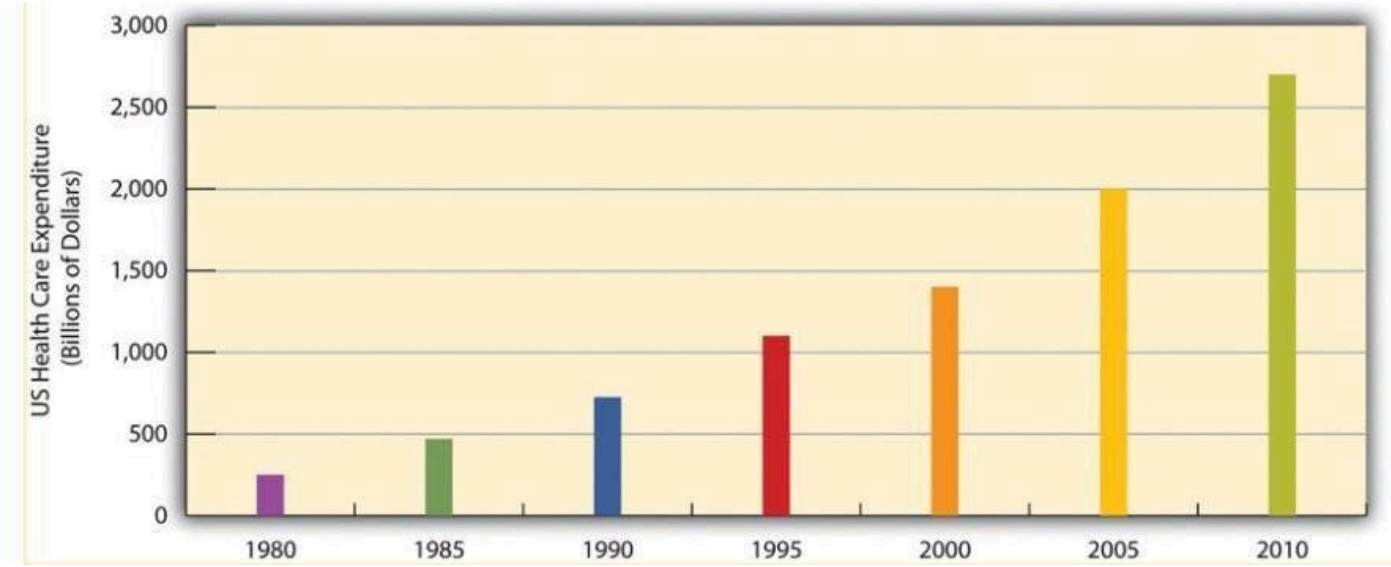


Figure 7.15. Expenditures for health care have increased tenfold since 1980. “U.S. Health Care Expenditure, 1980–2010 (in Billions of Dollars)” in Social Problems by Anonymous. License: CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Based on data from Statistical Abstracts/U.S. Census.

Access to Health Care Coverage and Insurance

There are many insurance options in America, and we will see that they disproportionately benefit some and disadvantage others based on factors like sex, income, geographical location, and ethnicity. In 2017, some of the most common ways people accessed insurance included the following (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017):

Private plans:

- Employer-based (56%)
- Direct purchase (16%)

Government plans:

- Medicaid (19.3%)
- Medicare (17.2%)
- Military health care (4.8%)

To learn more about how people accessed health insurance coverage and who remained uncovered, watch this seven-minute video provided by the United States Census Bureau (figure 7.16).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 7.16. 2017 Income, Poverty and Health Insurance – Health Insurance Presentation [YouTube Video]. This video presents a visual representation and map of health insurance coverage in the United States. Transcript. "2017 Income, Poverty and Health Insurance – Health Insurance Presentation" by the U.S. Census Bureau. Public domain.

The ACA was created to make health care more affordable and to be less discriminatory in 2010. In 2016, Section 1557 provided new regulations to the ACA, including a way to enforce civil rights protections in health care by making it unlawful for health care entities to discriminate against protected populations if they receive any type of federal financial assistance. This included health insurance companies participating in the Health Insurance Marketplaces, providers who accept Medicare, Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) payments, and any state or local health care agencies, among others. This marked the first time that discriminatory practices on the basis of race, skin color, national origin, age, sex, disability status—and in some cases, sexuality and gender identity—were broadly prohibited in the arena of public and private health care (Rosenbaum, 2016).

Some of the common ways that lower-income families and individuals access insurance in Oregon are through programs like Medicaid and CHIP, which is referred to as the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) in Oregon (figure 7.17).

Figure 7.17. This table shows Oregon Health Plan income limits for application to Medicaid or OHP in 2023 (CareOregon—Medicaid eligibility, n.d.). But several other factors are considered, and the best way to find out if you are eligible is to apply. "Oregon Health Plan Income Limits 2020" by Anonymous. License: CC BY 4.0.

Family Size	OHP for Adults	OHP for Children
1	$1,677/month	$3,706/month
2	$2,268/month	$5,013/month
3	$2,859month	$6,319/month
4	$3,450/month	$7.625/month
5	$4,042/month	$8,932/month

Family Size	OHP for Adults	OHP for Children
6	$4,633/month	$10,238/month

Medicaid and Medicare

Let's review the general definitions of each of Medicaid and Medicare, which are frequently confused. Medicare is federally funded health insurance for people who are aged 65 or older, some younger people with disabilities, and people with end-stage renal disease. Medicaid also provides health care coverage, in this case, for eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults, and people with disabilities.

Like income taxes and social security, these government programs are built on a marriage model. This model presumes shared incomes and budgets for married households, as well as separate budgets for people who live together and are related in other ways, such as friendship, cohabitation, or blood ties.

Chronic disease and acute injuries can lead to staggering bills, even for families who have private or public health insurance, and this is a major contributor to bankruptcy, loss of home, remaining in poverty, and other financial crises. Eligibility for both programs is complicated and may affect family members in unexpected ways, as illustrated in the following interview.

In Focus: What if Your Spouse Was in a Devastating Car Accident?

If you would like to learn about a classic dilemma that a family with a health crisis faces, listen to this 19-minute interview with Carol Levine, a public health professional who faced a personal and health crisis when her husband was in a devastating car accident.

As you listen, ask yourself what would you do in a similar situation and how this relates to:

- Love
- Health equity
- Unions that are not marriage
- The institution of marriage

Medicaid is a federal and state-funded program that is managed by individual states. It provides government insurance to those who need it. Each state has the power to decide who is eligible for it, and most states focus on low-income individuals and those with disabilities. With the expansion of the ACA in 2014, states had the choice to expand their Medicaid to serve more citizens; Oregon is one of 37 states that elected to do so. If you would like to see up-to-date information on each state, consult this Kaiser Family Foundation interactive map and narrative.

The U.S. government's website about Medicaid (https://www.medicaid.gov) provides state-by-state report cards on a wide variety of health access and health quality measures. This variance in Medicaid eligibility creates great inequity for low-income families based on location. Those in states that have not expanded Medicaid face a much larger "coverage gap," meaning that many more families do not have access to health care insurance as shown in figure 7.18 (Garfield et al., 2020).

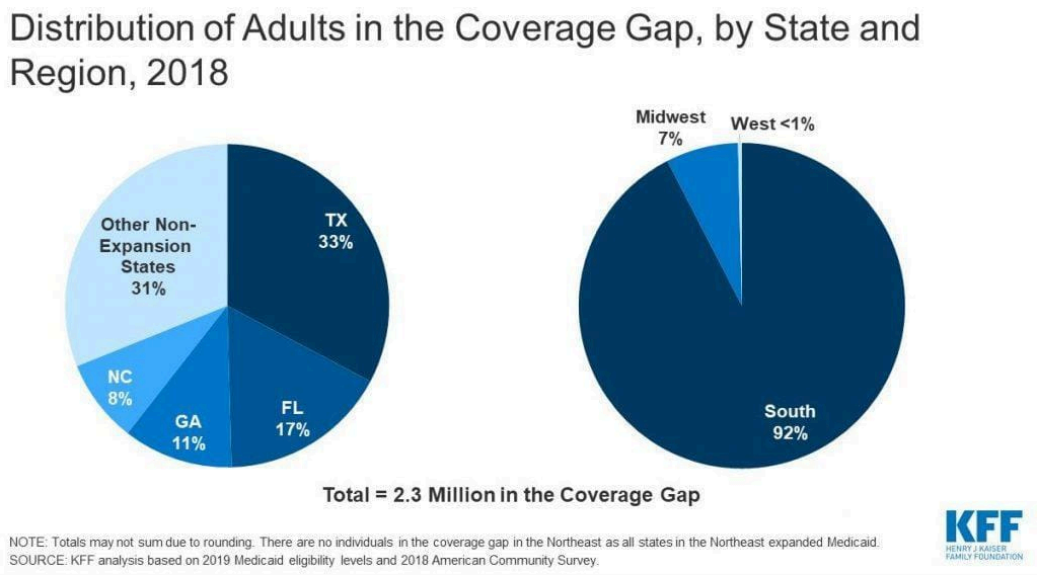


Figure 7.18. These graphs demonstrate that where you live affects your access to health care. Families who live in states that did not adopt the Medicaid expansion are more likely to have less access to health care. "Distribution of Adults in the Coverage Gap, by State and Region, 2018" by Peterson-KFF. License: CC BY-NC-ND 3.0.

Those who are age 65 or older can access health care insurance through Medicare, which is federally funded. Medicare covers about half of health care expenses for those enrolled, and many retirees who can afford to do so purchase private insurance or purchase additional coverage from Medicare itself to cover the gap (MedPac, 2020).

Who Is Left Out?

> "He who has health has hope; and he who has hope has everything."
> —Arabian Proverb

Most of the uninsured (84.6%) in the United States are working-age adults aged 19 to 64 years old. Men are overrepresented in these numbers; over half of all people without health insurance coverage were male (54.6%), even though the U.S. population has more women than men. The uninsured are disproportionately concentrated in the South (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). The number of people without health insurance has been increasing steadily since 2016; 8.5% of all Americans (27.5 million people) did not have health insurance at any point in the year 2018, according to the American Community Survey (Berchick et al., 2020).

SES plays a large part in access to health care. Occupation, education level, and chronic poverty all play contributing roles. The unique structure of tying health care insurance to full-time employment in the United States perpetuates income equality, as illustrated in figure 7.19. Income ties into important social determinants of health, including location of home, transportation, and quality of life. Medicaid, which is tied to income level, has limited medical coverage and often does not cover dental or vision care for adults. Plans vary from state to state. Children, older adults, and people of color are disproportionately affected by health inequities (Keenan & Vistnes, 2019).



Figure 7.19. During the coronavirus outbreak, many essential workers, like nurses, lacked personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks. “Where Did THEY Get Masks?” by Katie Niemeyer. License: CC BY 4.0.

A separate study showed that before the expansion of the ACA in 2014, about 41% of Hispanic people, 26% of Black people, and 15% of White people were uninsured, while after expansion, the rate of uninsured individuals decreased by 7% for Hispanic people, 5% for Black people, and 3% for White people (Buchmueller et al., 2016). Although the difference in rates for those uninsured has decreased, there is still a sizable gap that needs to be addressed in order to effectively address equity in access to health care (Inserro, 2018).

Even with these improvements, vast inequities exist from state to state. A family may be eligible to receive Medicaid in one state but not in another state, especially those states that have not expanded Medicaid. Geography matters. Although our country has a rhetoric of equality, family and health laws vary significantly from state to state, which reinforces inequalities. Eligibility ranges from having an income that is 40% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) to having an income that is 138% of the FPL: quite a difference!

Lack of health insurance has significant consequences because people are less likely to receive preventive health care and care for various conditions and illnesses. For example, because uninsured Americans are less likely than those with private insurance to receive cancer screenings, they are more likely to be diagnosed with more advanced cancer rather than an earlier stage of cancer (Halpern et al., 2008). In an analysis published in 2009, researchers found that there was a 25% higher risk of death for adults (aged 17 to 64) who were uninsured than those who had private insurance (Wilper et al., 2009).

Research and Drug Access

Pharmaceutical research and sales are a gargantuan business in the United States. The cost of developing any single new drug is estimated to be about $1 billion as symbolized by figure 7.20. Financing comes from the federal government and philanthropic organizations at the discovery research level; large sums of money are pumped into the initial stage of medication research (Institute of Medicine [U.S.] Forum on Drug Discovery, Development, and Translation, 2009).



Figure 7.20. Drug development is typically funded by the government and philanthropic organizations, but profits are funneled to corporations. “Money behind Health Care” by Truthout. License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Later-stage development is typically funded by pharmaceutical companies, which can be for-profit companies or nonprofit companies. For-profit companies may be funded by venture capitalists or as a part of larger corporations. Funding for nonprofit companies is a bit trickier; gaining access to federal and foundation funding takes staff time and expertise. The unequal and inequitable funding opportunities put nonprofits at a disadvantage because they have to invest more time in writing requests for grants and funding from government corporations.

The cost of drugs in the United States increased dramatically starting in the 1990s. It is important to note that American families do not have access to more medications than people in comparative countries. In fact, Americans use fewer prescription drugs and are more likely to use less expensive generic prescriptions. It really comes down to the price per pill; they simply cost more in the United States than in other countries, as shown in figure 7.21 (Haeder, 2019).

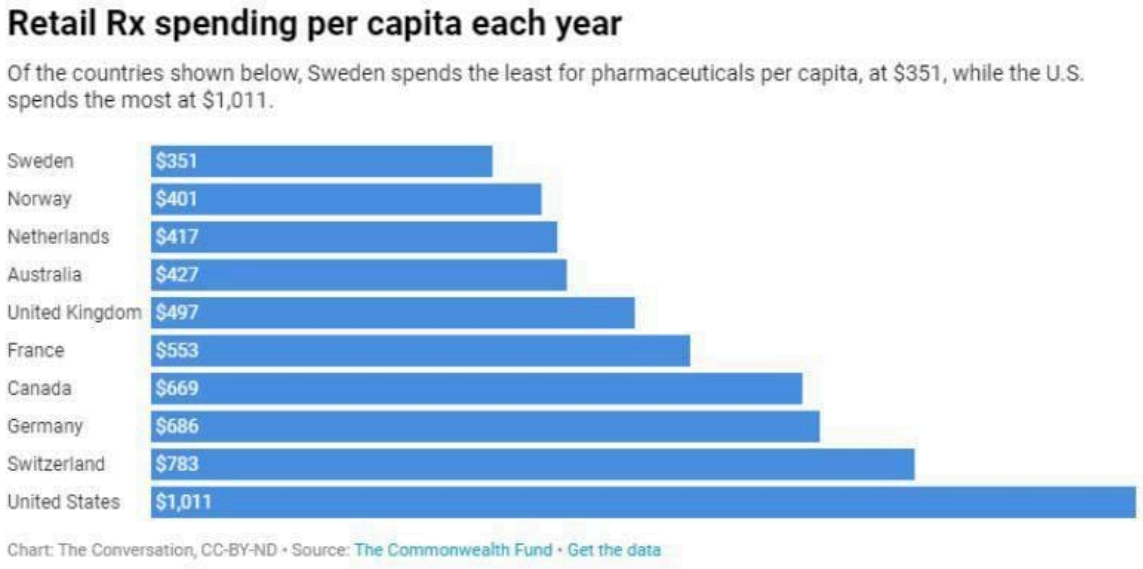


Figure 7.21. Pharmaceuticals cost more in the United States than in other countries. “Retail RX Spending per Capita Each Year” by The Conversation. License: CC BY-ND 4.0. Based on data from The Commonwealth Fund.

For-profit pharmacological companies have the upper hand in terms of distribution and overall influence on the decisions for research and funding for new medications in the United States. Ethical dilemmas arise when a company has a mission of profit for its employees and public shareholders and is selling a product that has an impact on the consumers’ health. Making a profit may frequently be at odds with making medication or medical products accessible to those with limited resources. The drive for

profit can also lead to overselling and overprescribing. It is for this reason that most countries (excluding the United States) do not allow drug research companies to profit and create state contracts with those companies in order to keep costs low (Gross, 1994).

In Focus: The Opioid Epidemic

An example of the power of for-profit drug companies can be found in the opioid epidemic. **Opioids** are substances that affect the neurons in our brain by blocking pain and providing a feeling of calm and euphoria. The opioid epidemic began in the United States in the 1940s. While medications like heroin and morphine have been used for pain management for thousands of years, they became more popular during World War II, when heroin and morphine were used to treat war veterans and people who had experienced trauma and wounds from battle.

Families in the United States with members who have difficulty navigating proper pain management have found opioids to be one solution. Prescriptions for these medications were given out and dispensed very generously, even for temporary pain, starting in the mid-20th century. As usage increased dramatically in the 1990s, pharmaceutical companies assured the medical community and patients that these drugs were not addictive (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). It is now known that addiction to these opioids and other substances often starts with prescription medications and progresses to a more dangerous level of use if left unchecked (figure 7.22).

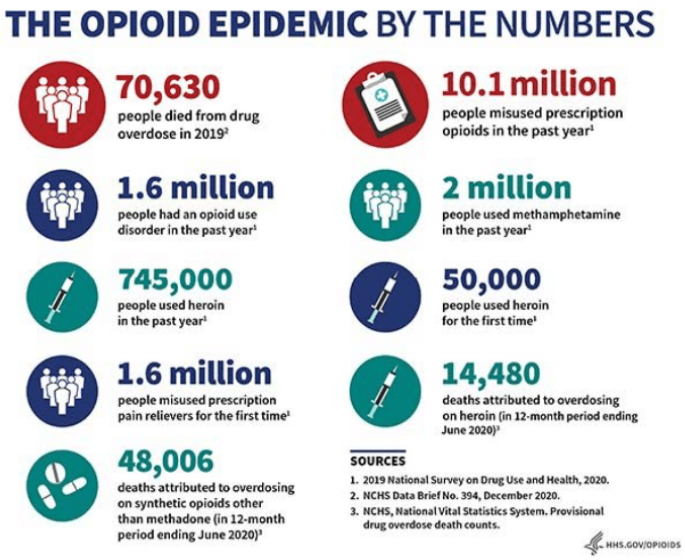


Figure 7.22. This 2020 chart illustrates the current opioid epidemic, which is estimated to kill over 130 people a day. “The Opioid Epidemic by the Numbers” by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public domain.

Private lawsuits and governmental action against pharmaceutical companies began to emerge in the early 2000s in the United States. It has been found that companies failed to follow government regulations related to drug production and regulations such as tracking and investigating suspicious orders for these medications. Both name-brand (e.g., Oxycodone) and generic drug manufacturers were guilty of these actions, although generic manufacturers remained unchecked for longer. Companies made billions of dollars in profits during this same period of time (Yerby, 2020).

Lawsuits against drug companies and distributors by the federal government, multiple states, Native American tribes, and local municipalities show promise for compensation. Examples include allegations of deceptive business practices, fraud, lax monitoring, and oversaturation of the market (Haffajee & Mello, 2017). These actions resulted not only in negative consequences for individuals but also contributed to systemic breakdown in communities.

The ripple effects of opioid abuse on families and communities are difficult to quantify. While overdoses and deaths can be counted, the loss and grief are immeasurable. Diminished parenting, loss of employment, loss of housing, and broken relationships all affect families, schools, workplaces, and communities. The effects of drug addiction and trauma are generational. We will not know how many families have been affected by this multi-century epidemic until well into the future.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=913#h5p-33

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7.5: Looking Ahead- Keeping Your Family Healthy

If you were to spend a few minutes brainstorming a list, what would you include as the most important requirements to keeping your family healthy? While this chapter has focused on health care and health insurance as important aspects of health management, the authors of this text would like to emphasize that health care starts with access and decision-making related to exercise, diet, relationships, work, sleep, intellectual stimulation, addictive substances, education, and social life. This is our list and perhaps you have other aspects to add.

Importantly, those individual and family decisions are directly impacted by the social institutions and processes at the core of the United States. Past and present laws, policies, practices, and biases that create and reinforce inequities mean that families live with vastly different access to resources, including food, safe and stimulating outdoor environments, time, work environments, social life, and health care.

Activism can help alleviate social problems, including the problem of poor health experienced by so many in the United States. With adequate health care, there is hope; many countries have successful models of health care that give all citizens access. In this country, groups, many led by physicians or other medical professionals, are working to create and/or modify systems to increase access to basic health care. Two prominent organizations are Health Care for ALL Oregon and Physicians for a National Health Program. If you would like to understand the rationale for single-payer health care, take a look at one or both of these web pages.

While families in the United States strive to make the best choices for themselves, they are limited by the existing access to resources needed to be as healthy as possible. Some of these inequities were created by past laws and practices. But those, and others, can be adjusted and changed. The societal and governmental commitment to the standards of health and well-being, as identified in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, is one way to begin.

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7.6: Going Deeper

Now that you have read about the complexities of health, health care, and health insurance, this page has some more resources for you.

First, there are some thought-provoking resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table or in the following activity. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- To read more about the social determinants of health model, consult Healthy People 2030.
- To read more about the relationship between physical and mental health, check out this brief article from PsychCentral here.
- In 2017, *The Lancet* published a comprehensive series about inequality and health care in the United States. The Table of Contents for the series is linked here; although it is free, you will need to log in to read the series of articles.
- To learn more about the AAP's recommendations for treating child obesity, read NPR's "Childhood Obesity Requires Early, Aggressive Treatment, New Guidelines Say."
- What are the 10 essential health benefits mandated by the ACA? Anyone who buys health care via the health care exchange is entitled to these benefits.
- For more on sleep disparities, review this study.
- For greater detail on adults aged 18 to 64 who are uninsured, review this 2019 report from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Reflective Questions

1. How do socially constructed ideas affect health?
2. What is the advantage of understanding disparities related to social characteristics (race, gender, etc.)?
3. Why are people with mental illness or abuse substance disorders less likely to get medical care and support?
4. What are the challenges to all families being able to keep themselves healthy by meeting basic needs such as sleep, exercise, and a good diet?
5. How does family structure affect access to health insurance and health care?
6. How do geography and income levels overlap when it comes to healthy families and communities?
7. What role does capitalism play in the opioid epidemic?
8. If you were tasked with improving health for families in the United States, what changes would you propose?

Key Terms

- **Health:** the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- **Health disparities:** preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations.
- **Health equity:** equal access to health benefits for all people, regardless of identity.
- **Health insurance:** a type of insurance, paid for by the consumer or another entity, that covers the whole or a part of the risk

of a person incurring medical expenses.
- **Mental health:** a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life.
- **Mental illness:** a wide range of mental health disorders that affect your mood, thinking, and behavior.
- **Opioid:** substances that affect the neurons in our brain by blocking pain and providing a feeling of calm and euphoria.
- **Stigma:** a negative or discriminatory attitude toward others related to a specific characteristic or difference, often of a marginalized identity.
- **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:** an international document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that enshrines the rights and freedoms of all human beings.

Activity: Sleep Is a Superpower

If you would like to learn some more surprising and specific health effects of sleep, watch the 19-minute TED Talk in figure 7.23 that discusses reproductive systems, memory, and cardiovascular systems.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 7.23. Sleep Is Your Superpower [YouTube Video]. Matt Walker talks about sleep as a superpower. Transcript.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you hear in this talk that was new or surprising to you?
2. What are some of the correlated health effects of losing an hour of sleep (daylight savings time) or gaining an hour of sleep?
3. How does sleep affect your immune system, heart, reproductive system, or brain?
4. If you are not getting enough sleep, what could you do to increase the sleep you get? What about this video might influence you to prioritize more sleep?

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CHAPTER 8: HOUSING

Learning Objectives

1. Describe where and how families live in the United States.
2. Define houselessness and housing insecurity.
3. Explain institutional barriers and inequities in home ownership and which families are affected.
4. Define redlining, bluelining, and the Fair Housing Act.
5. Relate economics and power to home ownership.
6. Analyze how where someone lives relates to other aspects of family life, such as health.
7. Recommend some solutions to the housing challenges that families face in the United States.
8. Analyze housing and equity related to one's own observations and experiences.

8.1: Chapter Reading Guide

8.2: Housing and Homes

8.3: Power and Housing Access

8.4: Housing Inequities' Effects on Families

8.5: Community Efforts to Improve Housing Access

8.6: Looking Ahead- Meeting Families' Needs

8.7: Going Deeper

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8.1: Chapter Reading Guide

This chapter examines how families live in the United States, as well as where they live and whom they live with. It is focused on the current experiences families are having with houselessness (the term is considered more respectful than homelessness) and housing insecurity. As you read, you will look at how power and oppression have played significant roles in whether or not families obtain housing and how past practices still affect today's families. There are several solutions to the current housing problems suggested in this chapter.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. Preview those to have an idea of where you are headed. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Affordable housing:** housing that can be accessed and maintained while paying for and meeting other basic needs such as food, transportation, access to work and school, clothing, and health care.
- **Bluelining:** real estate that is considered high risk due to low elevation and flooding due to climate change may not qualify for loans.
- **Bracero program:** a series of laws and diplomatic agreements initiated in 1942, when the United States signed an agreement with Mexico.
- **Cost-burdened households:** households that pay 30% or more of monthly income toward housing.
- **Discrimination:** the unequal treatment of an individual or group on the basis of their statuses (e.g., age, beliefs, ethnicity, sex).
- **Environmental justice:** focuses on equal protection against hazards and meaningful action to correct past discrimination.
- **Fair Housing Act:** an act that protects people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities.
- **Household size:** all the people occupying a housing unit.
- **Houseless/houselessness:** lacking a permanent place to live.
- **Housing First:** an approach with the belief that people need basic necessities like food and shelter before focusing on other needs such as substance use, employment, or budget.
- **Housing insecurity:** having a place to live but having uncertainty about meeting basic needs or needing to move frequently.
- **Redlining:** the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable or racially occupied.
- **Residential segregation:** the physical separation of two or more groups into different neighborhoods.
- **Renters:** a person who does not own their place of living but pays another party to live in their place of living.
- **Section 8 housing:** a program that authorizes the payment of rental housing assistance to private landlords on behalf of low-income households.
- **Shelters:** places and organizations that provide temporary living space for houseless families and individuals.

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8.2: Housing and Homes

> I just feel like I influence people because I'm like—I was practically homeless.
> —Cardi B

Housing is another word for the place that families go each night to find shelter not only from the physical elements, but also to find enough emotional safety that they can become centered, rejuvenated, and sleep securely. In the best scenarios it provides not only security, but a place for families to love and nurture the self and one another.



Figure 8.1 Cardi B rose from poverty to fame. "Cardi B live auf dem Openair Frauenfeld 2019" by Frank Schwichtenberg. License: CC BY-SA 4.0.

Cardi B, a famous rapper (born as Belcalis Almanzar), describes being able to move out of her abusive boyfriend's home with money earned from her work stripping in a club. "There were two pit bulls in that house, and I had asthma. There were bed bugs, too," she said. "On top of that, I felt like my ex-boyfriend was cheating on me, but it was like even if he was cheating on me, I still can't leave because—where was I gonna go?" (Akhtar, 2017).

In Cardi B's case (figure 8.1), she had safety from the outside physical world. But she was not safe inside her home. This is just one example of the complexities of housing, and specifically the ways that inequities play out in the United States.

Income is the primary determining factor in housing access. Price, availability, location, and macroeconomics all play a role, but a family's annual income is the main determinant in housing affordability (Tilly, 2006). Therefore, inequities in income distribution directly affect housing access, and the capability of families to be safe, secure, and able to function to their maximum potential.

Cardi B grew up living between two different Bronx neighborhoods in New York City. When she describes her parents, she says, "I have real good parents, they poor. They have regular, poor jobs and what not," she said in an interview with the news organization Global Grind. "They real good people and what not, I was just raised in a bad society" (Shamsian & Singh, 2019). It is common for U.S. working families to be unable to afford adequate housing, pictured in 8.2.

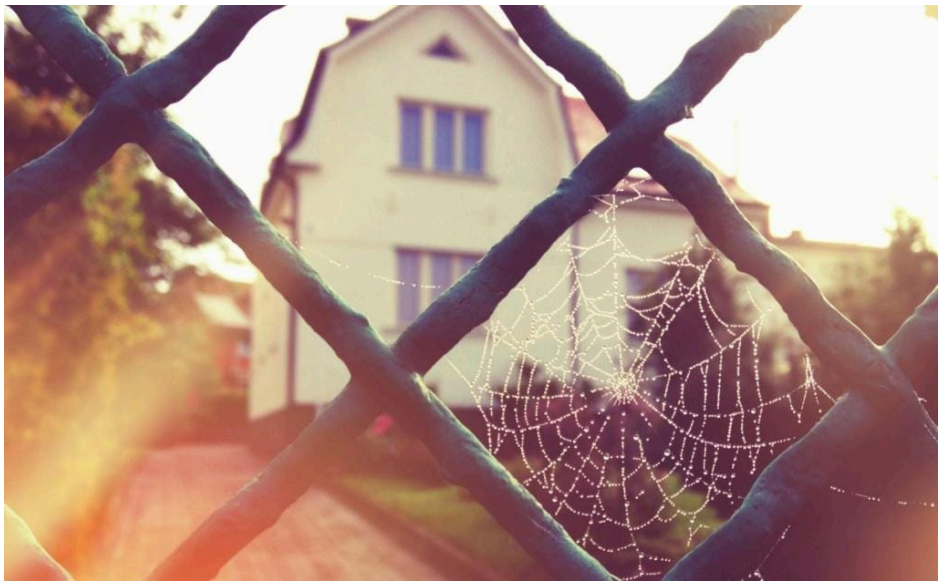


Figure 8.2. Some families with multiple wage-earners and jobs, are prohibited from buying a home. “home sweet home” by Libor Gabrhel. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Part-time and temporary jobs frequently come with lower pay and fewer benefits, such as health care, sick leave, and other paid and unpaid leaves. This makes it harder to budget for regular expenses such as food and housing. Sex, sexuality, immigration status, and ethnicity matters when it comes to full-time permanent work, meaning that it is also likely women, immigrants, and people from marginalized ethnic and sexuality groups are more likely to have fewer of these jobs and more difficulty saving for housing.

Where Families Live

Considering the location of families in the United States, we will briefly look at three factors: geography, types of locations, which commonly include urban, suburban, and rural communities, and **household size**. Household size refers to the number of people living together in a dwelling. Exurbs, a relatively new term, describes areas just outside of suburban communities that typically feature low-density housing and large homes. These may overlap into farm or forested areas, but they are not considered rural.

Population distribution is divided into four main regions by the U.S. Census Bureau in order to register the population: the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West; see the map in figure 8.3 for divisions within regions.

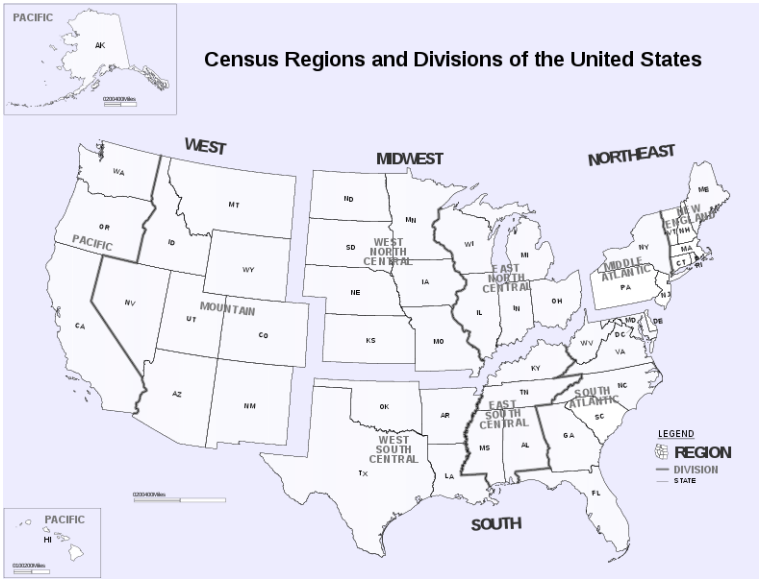


Figure 8.3. The U.S. Census Bureau divides the United States into four regions: the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. “Census Regions and Division of the United States” by U.S. Census Bureau. Public domain.

The population is spread unevenly across the United States, with density focused in the Northeast and Southern regions and two smaller divisions: the East North Central in the Midwest and the Pacific division of the West, which includes Oregon (figure 8.4).

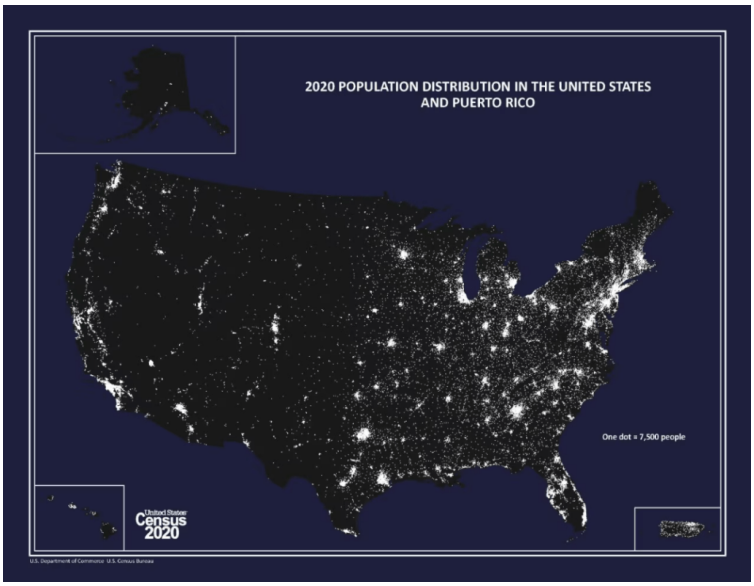


Figure 8.4. Although the population of the United States is growing, the rate of growth is slowing. The four states that have the most numeric growth in the past 10 years are Texas, Florida, Arizona, and North Carolina. The states with the highest percentage growth are South Carolina, Florida, Texas, and Idaho, which experienced between 1.3% and 1.7% growth from 2022 to 2023 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). “2010 Population Distribution in the United States and Puerto Rico” by U.S. Census Bureau. Public domain.

Where families live can also be examined related to living in urban, suburban, rural, and exurban (prosperous districts outside of the suburbs) areas. Over the second half of the 20th century and the first part of the 21st century, families generally moved away from urban centers and into the suburbs. However, the recession of 2008 to 2015 reversed that trend, and urban areas experienced some growth while suburbs and exurbs declined. Since 2016, the overall trend has again shifted, increasing family growth in suburbs and metropolitan areas (as opposed to urban cores), with Midwestern metro areas seeing the most growth (Frey, 2018). Values, racial-ethnic groups, and education are all factors in family location.

Environments and locations have differing health advantages and risks. Air quality, access to green spaces, clean water, and places to recreate are often described as “quality of life” factors. However, a greater emphasis is critical as these are considered to be as important to overall health as are genetics and lifestyle (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). Air and

water will be discussed more in-depth in Chapter 10. With the advent of shelter-at-home restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, home environments have become an even greater factor in our overall health.

How Families Live

Finding a place to call "home" is important. Living in a place that supports access to outdoor spaces, a feeling of security, effective schools, transportation, food, and other resources, and the potential for community are quality factors that affect a family's ability to function effectively and efficiently. We might call these "livable environments."

Home ownership has been and is still the most basic and viable way to accrue wealth in the United States. Access to home ownership is important to families for both livability and financial investment purposes. Uncovering the inequities in access to home ownership is critical to understanding the well-being of families in the United States.

Household size had been declining from 1790 through 2010, going from an average size of 5.79 people to 2.58 people. Since then, it has increased to 2.63 people in 2018. This increase is likely due to several factors. The recession affected families across the United States, and many families "doubled up" in their housing. In addition, the trend of young adults living with their parents for longer periods of time decreases the number of independent households (Fry, 2019). And there is an increase in multigenerational households. This reflects the growing racial-ethnic diversity in the United States; Asian, Hispanic, and Black families are more likely to live in multigenerational households than non-Hispanic White families (Menasce et al., 2019). The trend of increasing household size is important to note because it will likely impact the economy in the United States if it continues, as it will influence the amount of new housing construction.

Families that **rent** (pay to live in a home owned by someone else) homes rather than buy are on the increase; more people are renting now than at any time in the last 50 years. This is not due to lack of desire to own a home; in a 2016 Pew Research Center Survey, 72% of renters said that they desire to own a home (Cilluffo et al., 2017). Denial rates for mortgages continue to be higher for Black and Hispanic applicants. When they are approved, they tend to have higher monthly payments, which increases the cost burden on families. This is typically due to having fewer financial resources with which to make a down payment (Desilver & Bialik, 2017).

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=921#h5p-2

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8.3: Power and Housing Access

Katherine Hemlock; Carla Medel; and Elizabeth B. Pearce

Federal, state, and local governments all influence housing access via laws, zoning rules, permitting processes, and regulations. In addition, the government has the power to regulate the way that most Americans access home ownership, which is a loan agreement between an individual or couple and a lending institution such as a bank or credit union. In fact, it is the lending institution who owns any home, until the individual or couple completely pays the mortgage, which is a combination of the home's original price and the interest that is charged, typically over a 15-, 20-, or 30-year loan.

Together, government and lending institutions control who can borrow money, where they can access housing, the down payment required, and the interest rate that each family pays. These regulations do not treat all families equally: socioeconomic status, racial-ethnic identity, marriage and sexuality, and immigrant and documentation status have all played a role in lending policies over time in the United States. Immigrants and individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status have difficulty securing loans due to ambiguous federal legislation affecting their status. People who do not have a social security number are eligible for loans, but these typically require a higher down payment and higher interest rates.

Home foreclosures added to the economic disparity following the housing market crash of 2008. Over half of U.S. states were affected by prior predatory lending practices and lack of oversight of the banking system. Uninsured, private market subprime loans were made available with looser requirements, quickly driving up the price of homes so that some people owed more on their house than it was worth. Many were considered "underwater in their loans" or "upside-down" in their home value and defaulted on payments. Banks took back homes and many families were forced into shelters, living in their cars, or the homes of family members increasing the numbers of cost-burdened, housing insecure, and houseless families.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined as housing that can be accessed and maintained while paying for and meeting other basic needs such as food, transportation, access to work and school, clothing, and health care. Diverse income levels, reinforced by governmental and lending practices that discriminate based on racial-ethnic groups, immigration status, and socioeconomic status, widen the gap between those who are housing secure, housing insecure, and houseless.

The housing choice voucher program, more commonly known as **Section 8 housing**, is the federal government's program for assisting low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford housing. An important thing to notice is how because housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants themselves are able to find their own housing.

Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHAs). The PHAs receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Sometimes, a family could even use its voucher to purchase a home with a PHA's authorization (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d.).

Qualifying for Section 8 housing is not a guarantee of moving into affordable housing. In 2020, the median wait time for people who have applied for a housing voucher in the United States is 1.5 years, with some waits as long as seven years. Currently in Oregon there are 13 open waiting lists and at least seven counties where families cannot even get on a waiting list (Affordable Housing Online, n.d.).

Houselessness

In 2019, over a half million Americans were considered **houseless,** which means they do not have a permanent place to live. Commonly referred to as "the homeless" or "homeless people" in the past, the terms "unhoused" and "houseless people" are now considered to be more respectful and accurate. This encompasses the movement toward "person-first language" as well as the distinctions between a house, which refers to a physical shelter, and a home, which includes both shelter as well as family, loved ones, or other comforts.

Many of the people lacking housing are children and youth. In early 2018, just over 180,000 people in 56,000 families with

children experienced houselessness. More than 36,000 young people (under the age of 25) were unaccompanied youth who were houseless on their own; most of those (89%) were between the ages of 18 and 24 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018). In 2020, 580,466 people were experiencing houselessness. The Annual Homeless Assessment Report to the U.S. Congress reports on demographics such as age, veteran status, families with children, and whether people are in sheltered or unsheltered locations while houseless (figure 8.5).

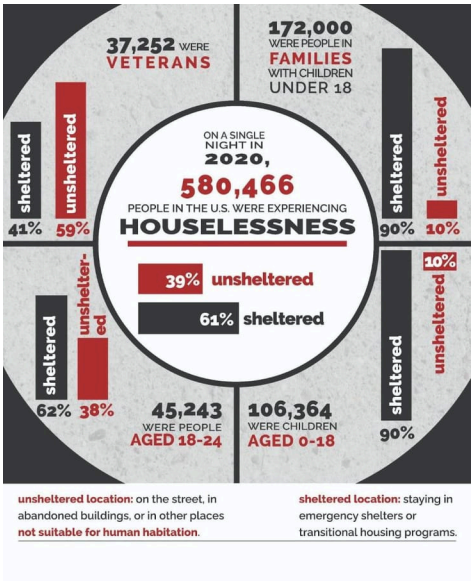


Figure 8.5. The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to the U.S. Congress reported about persons who experience houselessness during a 12-month period, point-in-time counts of people experiencing houselessness on one day in January, and data about shelter and housing available in a community. Image description. By Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi-Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0.

As shown in figure 8.6, a recent national survey that included Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) in Albany, Oregon, found that students at the two-year institution had higher levels of houselessness than do their counterparts nationally. With a response rate of 9.7%, 558 of 5,700 surveyed LBCC students participated in the 2019 #RealCollege Survey Report instituted by Temple University in 2019. Nineteen percent of LBCC students reported experiencing houselessness in the past year, compared with 17% nationally. In addition, 53% of LBCC students reported experiencing housing insecurity (described below) in the past year, compared with 50% nationally.

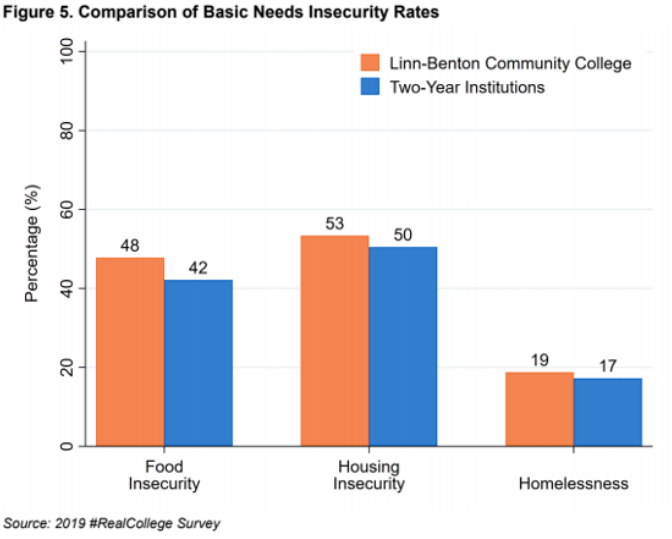


Figure 8.6. A recent national survey that included Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon, found that students at the two-year institution had higher levels of houselessness than their counterparts nationally. “Comparison of Basic Needs Insecurity Rates” © The Hope Center. Used with permission.

This report indicates that more than half of community college students are struggling with some kind of stress related to having a safe, stable place to care for themselves and their families. Demographic factors that indicate a higher rate of houselessness and housing insecurity include being a woman, transgender, Native American, Black, Latine, or 21 and older. Although White people, men of color, younger students (18 to 20), and athletes were less likely to experience houselessness or housing insecurity, they still did so in double-digit percentages (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019).

Living in tents, couch surfing, and car sleeping are all forms of houselessness. In an effort to provide stability and safety to the houseless population, formal encampments called tent cities have popped up across America in response to the cost of living and other societal problems (figure 8.7). Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon, provides a community that is self-organized and offers a bit of security. Because the majority of tent cities are not legal, people living in them lack stability and live under the threat of being swept or evicted. In 2017, there were 255 tent cities reported across the United States, ranging in size from 10 to over 100 people living in them. "Of those [tent cities] where legality was reported, 75% were illegal, 20% silently sanctioned, and 4% legal." Tent cities are a response to the fact that most city-run shelter beds are maxed out, and affordable housing has not become available in response to the growing need (Invisible People, n.d.).



Figure 8.7. The Wayne L. Morse federal courthouse is within sight of a temporary location of the Whoville Homeless Camp in Eugene, Oregon. "Whoville Homeless Camp (Eugene, Oregon)" by Visitor7. License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

Temporary Housing

Shelters for people who are houseless provide needed temporary immediate service to over 1.5 million Americans each year (Popov, 2017). Primarily federally funded, many nonprofit organizations also provide support and temporary shelter for families and individuals. Some are so full that they sleep people in shifts, especially in the cold of winter. Many houseless people have nowhere to go during the day; however, day shelters, such as Rose Haven in Portland, Oregon, offer services to those in need. The shelter serves about 3,500 individuals, including women, children, and gender nonconforming people who experience trauma, poverty, and health challenges.

Tensions exist among tent dwellers, staff, and users of shelters, as well as in business and home-owning communities. This is exemplified in Corvallis, Oregon, where the community has struggled for years to find a permanent location for a men's overnight cold-weather shelter. Advocates for people who are houseless argue for a location close to needed city services; accessibility is important when walking, bicycling, and public transportation are the primary modes of getting around. These needs bump up against business owners' desires for welcoming environments. Most recently, churches outside of the downtown area have allowed people to erect tents on the church property (Hall, 2019). With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, more people who are houseless are moving into tents, and the city has intentionally stopped removing illegal campsites. In addition, Corvallis is providing hygiene centers that include showers, handwashing, laundry, and food services (Day, 2020).

The socially constructed ideas of "normal" or "acceptable" identities are barriers to many people accessing shelter, housing, and other services. In houseless shelters, transgender women may be refused admittance by the women's shelter and at risk of violence at the men's shelter. More progress must be made to provide security for all, regardless of identity (National Center for

Transgender Equality, 2019).

Another barrier some women with children face in seeking shelter from domestic violence is the shelter rules themselves. Early curfews and overly strict rules can compromise the empowerment of residents. Many women fleeing domestic violence find themselves facing punitive and inflexible environments that mimic the patterns of control they are trying to escape. The Washington State coalition against domestic violence, called Building Dignity, "explores design strategies for domestic violence emergency housing. Thoughtful design dignifies survivors by meeting their needs for self-determination, security, and connection. The idea here is to reflect a commitment to creating welcoming, accessible environments that help to empower survivors and their children" (Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d.).

Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity is less obvious than houselessness. People who are houseless are somewhat visible, but we may be less likely to know whether or not someone is housing insecure. That's because it is an umbrella term that encompasses many characteristics and conditions. Signs of **housing insecurity** include missing a rent or utility payment, having a place to live but not having certainty about meeting basic needs, experiencing formal or informal evictions, foreclosures, couch surfing, and frequent moves (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d.). It can also include being exposed to health and safety risks such as mold, vermin, lead, overcrowding, and personal safety fears such as abuse (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, n.d.). Cardi B's living situation, which she describes as "practically homeless," illustrates housing insecurity.

Housing insecurity can be defined as a social problem; the current estimates are that 10% to 15% of all Americans are housing insecure. The increase in the number of **cost-burdened households**, households that pay 30% or more of monthly income toward housing, is dramatic among families who rent homes. Since 2008, these households have increased by 3.6 billion to include 21.3 billion by 2014. And households with the most severe cost burden (paying 50% or more for housing) increased to a record 11.4 million (Harvard University, 2016). By definition, a **cost-burdened household** is one that also faces housing instability and insecurity.

Somewhere In-Between

A well-established housing system that is often overlooked is immigrant housing. There are many immigrants who come to the United States as part of a guestworker program, which dates back to 1942 with the Bracero Program and continues through the hiring today of H2-A workers. Although these folks are called "guest workers," they are not treated as guests when it comes to living spaces.

The **Bracero Program** was an agreement between the United States and Mexico to bring in a few hundred Mexican laborers to harvest sugar beets in California. What was thought to be a small program eventually drew, at its peak, more than 400,000 workers a year. When it was abolished in 1964, a total of about 4.5 million jobs had been filled by Mexican citizens. After the Bracero Program, foreign workers could still be imported for agricultural work under the H-2 program, which was created in 1943 when the Florida sugar cane industry obtained permission to hire Caribbean workers to cut sugar cane on temporary visas. The H-2 program was revised in 1986 and was divided into the H-2A agricultural program and the H-2B non-agricultural program, which are still up and running today. These programs provide temporary jobs and income for workers but do not offer any advantage in terms of establishing residency or citizenship in the United States.

The protections provided to these guest workers vary depending on the program they are under, so the quality of living varies widely but is often low quality. The housing vicinities lack basic necessities and are often in areas considered to be dangerous. Many guest workers find themselves living in one-room containers that later may be split up between many workers. Other guest workers find themselves living in tent cities, placed right next to the field where they are picking crops. One tent is provided to fit multiple guest workers or an entire family.

These living spaces are often in very rural locations, which isolates these workers and makes them totally reliant on their employers. Many employers forbid them from bringing visitors, which reinforces the guest workers' dependence on the employer and limits the likelihood of reports about the poor living conditions or other violations (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.).

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

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8.4: Housing Inequities' Effects on Families

Carla Medel; Katherine Hemlock; Dominic Church; Shonna Dempsey; and Elizabeth B. Pearce

The government and financial organizations both hold substantial power in the United States. Together, they affect how homes are purchased and who can purchase them. Although we know that race is a social construction, it is still used as an identifying feature for families, and it has been used by these systems to control home purchases and to segregate living areas. We will discuss housing from the perspective of racial-ethnic groups affected by these regulations and practices.

While it may be obvious that home ownership increases stability and enables individuals and families to accrue wealth, it is also true that home ownership has a significant effect on the life satisfaction of low-income people. Home buyers have been found to have higher levels of life satisfaction and may also have increased self-esteem and a sense of control compared to renters (Rohe & Stegman, 1994). It is impossible to talk about lower rates of home ownership among minoritized groups without discussing the practices of intentional segregation and gouging enacted by the federal government, lending institutions, local governments, and housing covenants following the legal end of slavery in the United States. Figure 8.8 is an example of signage from this time period.



Figure 8.8. Segregated neighborhoods did not come about organically but rather through deliberate planning of policies and practices. "Sign: 'We Want White Tenants in our White Community'" by Arthur Siegel/Office of War Information. Public domain.

Redlining

Redlining is the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable or racially occupied. Although homeownership became an emblem of American citizenship and the American dream during the 20th century, Black families and other marginalized populations were specifically limited in their abilities to purchase homes. Both the federal government, which created the Home Owners' Loan Corporation in 1933 and the Federal Housing Association in 1934, along with the real estate industry, worked to segregate White neighborhoods from other groups in order to preserve property values.

Lending institutions and the federal government did this by creating maps in which the places where people of color and foreign-born individuals lived were colored red (figure 8.9). Then, those areas were designated to be "dangerous" or "risky" in terms of loaning practices. Because families in these same groups were often denied access to the neighborhoods designated to be "good" or "the best," they were forced to take loans that required higher down payments and/or higher interest rates.

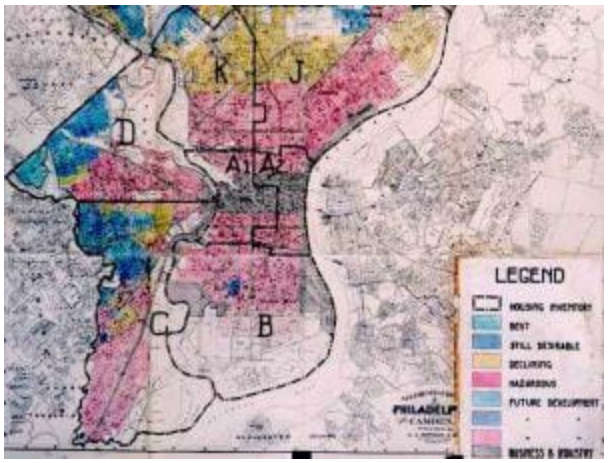


Figure 8.9. Lending institutions and the federal government created maps in which the places where people of color and foreign-born individuals lived were colored red. This led to the practice we now refer to as redlining. “Home Owners’ Loan Corporation Philadelphia redlining map.” Public domain.

The Home Owners’ Loan Corporation, which regulated home loans, created residential security maps divided into four different categories:

- Green: “The best” for businessmen
- Blue: “Good” for white-collar families
- Yellow: “Declining” for working-class families
- Red: “Detrimental” or “Dangerous” for “foreign-born people, low-class whites, and negroes”

These ratings indicated to lending institutions how “risky” it was to provide loans by area. It was then less likely that loans could be secured in the red and yellow neighborhoods; interest and payments would be higher. Unscrupulous private lenders used this opportunity to create unfair practices such as unreasonably high payments with devastating consequences if one payment or partial payment was missed, such as the Black homeowner losing their home and all equity that had been earned (Coates, 2014).

In 1968, these practices were outlawed by the Fair Housing Act, which was part of the Civil Rights Act. **The Fair Housing Act** is an attempt at providing equitable housing to all. It makes discriminating against someone based on skin color, sex, religion, and disability illegal. Also banned is the practice of real estate lowballing, where banks underestimate the value of a home, in effect forcing a borrower to come up with a larger down payment to compensate for the lower loan value. The offering of higher interest rates, insurance, and terms and conditions to minority loan applicants is illegal. Denying loans and services on the basis of an applicant’s protected class is also illegal.

Still, much damage was done prior to its passage. For decades, the federal government poured tax monies into home loans that almost exclusively favored White families. Home ownership is the most accessible way to build equity and wealth, and it has been denied to many minority families for decades. Once the Fair Housing Act passed, local governments, residential covenants, and deed modifications continued to discriminate well into the 2000s, and families in marginalized groups still had less success in achieving home loans.

The result of these institutionalized efforts resulted in **residential segregation**, the physical separation of two or more groups into different neighborhoods. Many times, this form of segregation is associated with race, but it can also be associated with income. Segregated neighborhoods did not come about organically but through deliberate planning of policies and practices that have systematically denied equal opportunity to minority populations. Segregation has been present in the United States for many years, and while now it is illegal to do so, it has been institutionalized in neighborhood patterns (figure 8.10). From information collected in the 2010 census, we see that a typical White person lives in a neighborhood that is 75% White and 8% African American, while a typical African American person lives in a neighborhood that is 35% White and 45% African American (Frey, 2020).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 8.10 Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History [YouTube Video]. This video provides a summary of housing segregation in the United States. Transcript.

In Focus: Residential Segregation in Oregon

As a recipient of federal funding, the city of Portland, Oregon, is required to abide by the rules of the Fair Housing Act, but like many cities in the United States, Portland has a history of redlining and other discriminatory practices. In order to better understand Portland's practices, learning about Oregon's history is useful. Black exclusion laws were put in place when the state was founded in order to discourage people of color from settling in Oregon.

Between 1900 and 1930, Portland began zoning practices, the act of separating land based on what it will be used for, such as residential, industrial, and commercial. In 1924, Portland approved its first zoning code with the following zones:

- Zone 1 – Single-Family
- Zone 2 – Multifamily
- Zone 3 – Business-Manufacturing
- Zone 4 – Unrestricted

Most residential areas were designated Zone 2, except for 15 neighborhoods considered the "highest quality" that were designated Zone 1 (Hughes et al., 2019).

Between the 1930s and '40s, Portland City Council rezoned large areas of multifamily zoning to single-family zoning (figure 8.11). This was done to protect real estate values of single-family homes and make it easier for homeowners to obtain Federal Housing Administration loans in those areas. During this time, roughly 14.25 square miles was rezoned from multifamily to single-family housing. This was used as a tool to further reinforce racial segregation by restricting federal and private lending. It made it difficult, sometimes even impossible, for residents living in "redlined" neighborhoods to receive residential and commercial loans.

Neighborhood planning from 1960 to 1970 included the ideas of residents instead of only the real estate industry. Although many strong neighborhood associations formed, power continued to reside with the more affluent, mostly White neighborhoods, and the 1980 Comprehensive Plan favored expanding and protecting single-family zones.



Figure 8.11. Portland has failed to create more mixed neighborhoods. "Food carts – Portland, Oregon, USA" by Daderot. License: CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

In 1994, the Community and Neighborhood Planning Program was adopted to address issues that sprouted after the Comprehensive Plan. With this, they did the opposite of what had been done for many years in the past: expanding the multifamily zones. The program sought to expand and intermix multifamily housing, but it was met with resistance and controversy that led

to uneven results.

VisionPDX came forward in 2005 as an effort to engage community members, especially those from underrepresented communities, in developing a shared vision of Portland. They wanted to focus on providing an opportunity for input to those who previously had no say in the future of Portland. This new way of thinking about equity led to the development of new goals and policies in the most updated version of the Comprehensive Plan in 2016.

Today, single-family zoning accounts for approximately 74% of the total land area for housing in Portland. Since the 1920s, very little change has occurred with the original 15 single-family zones. These neighborhoods have remained stable and demographically homogeneous with low levels of vulnerability to displacement and tend to be the zones for White households. Similarly, the zones originally designated as less desirable are homes for many families from marginalized groups and contain fewer resources and amenities desired by families.

So what can we learn from this? Portland's land use planning history, intentional or not, has resulted in **discrimination,** the unequal treatment of an individual or group, and segregation. These planning practices and the decisions made have predominantly benefited and privileged White homeowners, while communities of color have been burdened, excluded, and displaced. Decision-making for collective improvement is often complicated when it affects individual outcomes. The same people who may believe in equity may also resist change when they perceive that it affects them individually. This is called the "Not in My Backyard" (NIMBY) phenomenon and likely affected Portland's failure to move toward creating more mixed neighborhoods. Portland and all cities can do better. Fair housing regulations can be achieved by understanding the history and then creating policy change, which will lead to more equitable outcomes.

Bluelining

Bluelining is a current banking and lending issue related to rising water levels that are a product of climate change. Real estate that is considered high risk due to low elevation and/or proximity to a floodplain may not qualify for loans. With the current rate of ocean warming, sea levels are expected to rise, and warm water will generate storms that will displace millions of people in the United States and worldwide (figure 8.12). "Climigration," a newly coined word that combines "climate" and "migration," describes the act of people relocating to areas less devastated by flooding, storms, drought, lack of clean water, or economic disaster due to the forces of climate change.

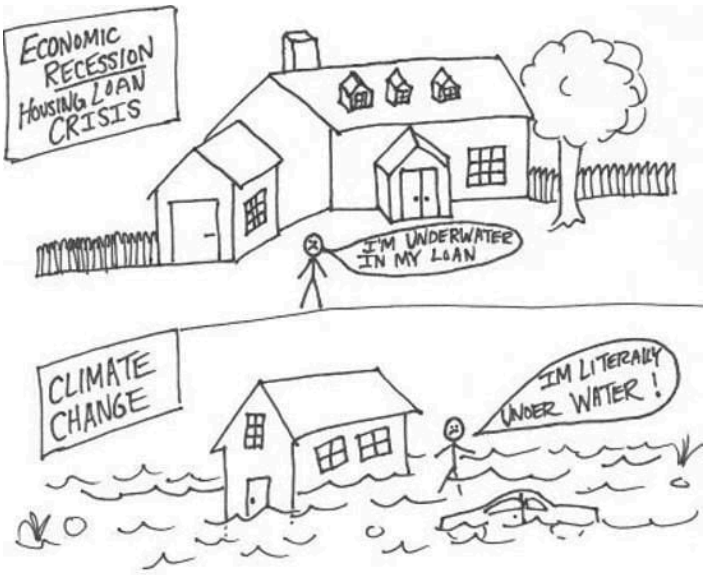


Figure 8.12. Homes at risk of being destroyed due to river, ocean, or storm flooding could lose value in the housing market. "Economic & Environmental Irony" by Kate Hemlock. License: CC BY 4.0.

Many American families relocate as jobs disappear or land becomes flooded or arid. In response to an immediate disaster, many families move to live with relatives or friends. Some families have nowhere to turn. The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment to Congress reported that 3,900 people were staying in sheltered locations specifically for people displaced by presidentially declared national disasters. They were displaced from areas struck by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, and Nate; Western wildfires; and other storms and events" (Henry et al., 2018).

Climate change has also changed the economic desirability of entire regions, creating a new divide between the poor and the privileged. In the Southern California region of Los Angeles, shade has become an increasingly precious commodity, giving respite from the searing heat that bakes the community during longer, hotter warm seasons.

In the 1950s, the lure of the California sunshine attracted settlers from across the United States to propel LA into a major metropolis. Now, shade provided by large tree-lined neighborhoods and areas of upscale urban design are enjoyed by the affluent but absent for those who need it the most. There is a public health benefit from trees, with studies showing benefits like lower asthma and improved mental health for those exposed to green spaces. The accessibility of green spaces is proving to have a direct impact on health (figure 8.13).



Figure 8.13. The accessibility of green spaces is proving to have a direct impact on health. "Green spaces (4)" by Anthony O'Neil. License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

People who live in less desirable neighborhoods and use public transportation also wait at the more than 750 bus stops where police ordered the removal or minimization of trees in an earlier era. To learn about an inventive solution to this problem, read about "Urban Farming: The "Gangsta Gardener" in Chapter 10. They spend more time outdoors, traveling to jobs and needing resources, and suffer the highest heat index (Arango, 2019).

For example, many families live without easy access to recreational trails and playgrounds. Laws, regulations, and lending corporations have actively participated in pushing minoritized racial-ethnic groups into these areas. We must pay attention to these past practices and the ways that they impact present families' health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became clear that the virus is transmitted more easily in crowded spaces indoors than in the outdoors (figure 8.14).



Figure 8.14. This graphic offers some tips for physical distancing outside during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Which families might have a more difficult time with being outdoors or social distancing? "COVID-19: Physical Distancing in Public Parks and Trails" © National Recreation and Park Association. Image used with permission.

There is a disproportionate number of coronavirus cases and deaths among marginalized populations in the United States, and it is possible that lack of access to outdoor spaces plays a role (Godoy & Wood, 2020). Large areas covered in concrete and asphalt, without greenery, contribute to quality of life, as shown in figure 8.15. So at the same time that this lack of resources makes it more difficult to maintain everyday physical and mental health, it may also contribute to illness, hospitalization, loss of employment, and even death during the pandemic.



Figure 8.15. People who live in less desirable neighborhoods and use public transportation suffer the highest heat index. "LA Metro 200 bus stop on Alvarado Street" by Downtowngal. License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

Environmental Factors Affect Families

Environmental factors, such as proximity to industry and landfills, also affect quality of life. In the U.S., the recycling rate of plastics is only 5% to 6% as of 2021, while at the same time generation of plastic waste per capita has increased by 263% since 1980. While paper, cardboard, and metal are recycled at higher rates, Plastic recycling has never reached 10%. Most of the plastics end up in harmful areas like landfills, incinerators, and areas that were not planned, like waterways (Fox, 2022).

Landfills continue to fill up as we produce more and more plastic waste. Families who make enough money to live in areas with funding for infrastructure can avoid living near landfills and plastic waste. Those who don't have enough can't afford to make these choices and end up disproportionately affected by plastics. This includes having to purchase bottled water when tap water is unsafe to buy, as well as living near waste disposal sites (Jones, 2022). Forty percent of the United States' total landfill capacity and 60% of the largest commercial hazardous waste landfills are in communities that are predominantly families with marginalized identities (Bullard, n.d.).

Change is challenging; those who are faced with the negative consequences of this waste are not the same as those who are benefiting financially. Change is unlikely without economic incentives for corporations to use more easily recyclable and less mixed materials, as it is cheaper to dispose of rather than recycle (STINA, 2021). A federal bill has been proposed: the Environmental Justice for All Act. "This bill establishes several **environmental justice** requirements, advisory bodies, and programs to address the disproportionate adverse human health or environmental effects of federal laws or programs on communities of color, low-income communities, or tribal and indigenous communities" (Congress, 2022). While promising, this bill has not yet been passed by the U.S. Congress.

In Focus: Reservation Land and Home Ownership

There is another group of families for whom it is more complicated and limited to build capital via home ownership: Native Americans who reside on reservations. When the United States government sequestered Native Americans to reservation lands, it also retained ownership of that land, creating a "ward: guardian relationship" between the government and the Indian Nations, as characterized by Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall in 1831 (*Cherokee Nations v. Georgia*, 1831). The government holds reservation lands "in trust" for the tribal nations.

While there is much public debate about other aspects of tribal rights, such as casinos and the effects of using Native American imagery and names for sports teams, there is little discussion at the legislative level about the ways the U.S. government has limited the abilities of Native Americans to own property within the communities where they live (Schaefer Riley, 2016). This most basic way of building equity in a country that values individualism and capitalism has been restricted to the people who have

inhabited it the longest. Native Americans have the highest poverty rate of any racial-ethnic group (28% in 2015), and it is likely that the control the government has exerted over their living conditions contributes to this circumstance (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Comprehension Self Check

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8.5: Community Efforts to Improve Housing Access

Elizabeth B. Pearce; Wesley Sharp; and Katherine Hemlock

Understanding and acknowledging past injustices is the first step toward making homes equitably available to all families. Efforts to make changes come from multiple directions. There are legislative changes (some which have passed and some that are proposed), and nonprofit agencies and advocacy groups that work both legislatively and with direct action. In addition, there are grassroots efforts to change neighborhood dynamics and to add resources.

Updating the Fair Housing Act with the Equality Act

Activism, pictured in figure 8.16, contributed to the passage of The Fair Housing Act in 1968. It originally banned the sale and rental of housing (and other housing practices) indicating preference or discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin. In 1974, it was amended to include sex, and in 1988, people with disabilities and people with children. To date, the Fair Housing Act does not protect gender identity or sexual orientation. Only a handful of states have made it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation and gender identity and that creates a challenge for LGBTQIA+ families and couples (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, n.d.).

In 2016, a rule by HUD ensured equal access to Community Planning and Development programs regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marriage status. Nonconforming gender individuals may find it difficult to access services as this rule applies to one specific program (and not to other public or private programs) (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016).



Figure 8.16. Many years of social activism, including protests, contributed to the creation and passage of the Fair Housing Act. “Fair housing protest, Seattle, Washington, 1964” by Seattle Municipal Archives. License: CC BY 2.0.

The 2019 Equality Act is an attempt to make all Americans equal in work, housing, and other public environments. The Equality Act has been proposed multiple times since the 1970s, the most recent being a 2021 bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives that would amend the Civil Rights Act to “prohibit discrimination on the basis of the sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition of an individual, as well as because of sex-based stereotypes.” This act was sent to the U.S. Senate most recently in March 2021 and was reintroduced in both chambers in 2023. It has not yet passed (Equality Act, 2021).

Addressing Houselessness: Housing First

People who are houseless can experience an overlap of social problems, such as poverty, untreated mental illness, unemployment,

and addictions. Traditionally, programs attempt to help people become “ready for housing” via support and criteria that may require multiple moves. For example, the person must become sober or employed first. A relatively new and innovative approach called Housing First sprung from grassroots efforts as early as 1988 in California and 1992 in New York. Simply put, **Housing First** prioritizes providing people with stable housing, which makes solving other problems more likely. Having a secure home and consistent access to schooling, transportation, and support services means that people can be more successful in addressing overlapping issues such as mental health, addiction, and seeking employment.

Review the first page of the Housing First: National Alliance to End Homelessness, which is a nonprofit organization that exemplifies the approach to end houselessness. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has endorsed the Housing First approach. HUD estimates that houselessness costs the government between $30,000 and $60,000 per person annually, due to emergency room visits and jail time. A less expensive solution is to actually provide people with housing.

Various communities have adopted the Housing First approach, and it looks different depending on the resources and principles of each location. Utah’s Housing First approach is a model for how these services can be made available. Through the collaboration of many local organizations and donations from local churches, real permanent semi-communal housing is provided, along with services such as counseling. A true success story, Utah was able to reduce its houseless rate by 91%, and the rate remains low, eight years later. For example, Grace Mary Manor in Salt Lake City is a permanent affordable housing facility for 84 chronically houseless individuals with a disabling condition. One resident, Joe Ortega, talks about the 1,000-piece puzzle he has laid out in his room, describing it as his “new addiction.” He was able to move into Grace Mary Manor and then address the drinking and drugs he had used to deal with life. Through programs like this, Utah was able to decrease its houseless population by 91% (Mcevers, 2015).

If you would like to see a local organization in action, check out this Portland group founded in 1992. They report that they supported 1,377 people leaving the street for permanent and stable housing in 2018. One year later, 83% of those families remain stable (Join, n.d.).

Standards to End Houselessness

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has determined criteria and benchmarks for communities to achieve the goal of ending chronic houselessness. Standards are important because they help us identify what we are working toward.

These criteria are summarized as follows:

1. The community has identified and provided outreach to all individuals experiencing or at risk for chronic houselessness and prevents chronic houselessness whenever possible.
2. The community provides immediate access to shelter or other temporary accommodations to any person experiencing unsheltered chronic houselessness who wants it.
3. The community has implemented a community-wide Housing First orientation and response that also considers the preferences of the individuals being served.
4. The community assists individuals experiencing chronic houselessness in moving swiftly into permanent housing with the appropriate level of supportive services and effectively prioritizes people for permanent supportive housing.
5. The community has resources, plans, and system capacity in place to prevent chronic houselessness from occurring and to ensure that individuals who experienced chronic houselessness do not fall into houselessness again or, if they do, are quickly reconnected to permanent housing.

These goals are considered met when the benchmark of maintaining these criteria has been met for 90 days. Though likely not achievable, the goal of zero houseless individuals in a community is aspirational (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2016).

Changing Opportunities

We’ve discussed at length redlining and the continuing effects on people of color. How can the effects of so many years of institutionalized discrimination be undone? Analysis and action can contribute to change. Communities across the United States have been analyzed by The Opportunity Atlas, which identifies neighborhoods from which children are most likely to rise out of poverty. Click on the link to assess your own community from a variety of social characteristics, including race, sex, and income (U.S. Census and Opportunity Insights, n.d.).

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management partnered with the Seattle Public Housing Authority and King County (WA) Public Housing Authority and used The Opportunity Atlas to create a pilot program that offered families using housing vouchers to move into "high opportunity neighborhoods" as defined by the Atlas. Research shows that each year spent in a high-opportunity neighborhood increases the likelihood of children going to college and total lifetime earnings by at least $200,000 (Chetty et al., 2016).

In the Creating Moves to Opportunity project, families received additional basic services, such as education on the location of opportunity neighborhoods, personalized rental application coaching, housing search assistance, and financial assistance. Fifty-four percent of the families receiving this assistance chose to move to opportunity neighborhoods compared to approximately 14% of families who received standard services. This demonstrates that families using housing vouchers are not choosing lower-opportunity neighborhoods because of preference; when given education, means, and the choice to move to higher-opportunity neighborhoods, they are more likely to do so. This still in progress project offers hope that there are ways that federal housing voucher programs can change the course of intergenerational poverty via investments in families who use vouchers (Delvin-Foltz, 2019). In 2019, HUD funded a larger version of this project (Bell, 2019).

Community Efforts

Individuals and communities are taking the initiative to improve their neighborhoods aesthetically and with increasing resources that benefit families, such as informal libraries, green spaces, and art houses.

For example, Theaster Gates, a University of Chicago professor who is also a potter and social activist, started by drawing attention to one rundown home that he refurbished and gradually organized multiple grassroots efforts that have used culture to transform the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood in Chicago (figure 8.17; TED Talks, 2015).



Figure 8.17. Theaster Gates organized multiple grassroots efforts that have used culture to transform the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood in Chicago. "Theaster Gates" by Locust Projects. Public domain.

In the video in figure 8.18, Gates discusses how imagination, beauty, and art can revive a neighborhood.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 8.18. How to Revive a Neighborhood: with Imagination, Beauty, and Art. Theaster Gates discusses how he has transformed abandoned buildings into create community hubs that connect and inspire those who live there (and draw in those who don't). Transcript. "How to Revive a Neighborhood: with Imagination, Beauty, and Art" by Theaster Gates/TED Talks. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Another organization, the international organization Firmeza Foundation based in the Netherlands, works with local

neighborhoods to create community artwork. Artists Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn (aka Haas and Hahn) work on the designs with community members, then hire and train local residents to complete the painting. Dre Urhahn describes the impact of the attention and love that community members pour into their neighborhoods, as well as the resulting beauty, as transformational aspects of the projects (Urhahn, 2017). Two well-known projects are the favela paintings in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Northern Philadelphia in the United States.

Community efforts are critical to ensuring housing for all. To learn about a community organization that sprung out of tragedy, participate in the Surviving the Echo Mountain Fire activity in the "Going Deeper" section.

Comprehension Self Check

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8.6: Looking Ahead- Meeting Families' Needs

In prior chapters, we have discussed models related to what human beings need. We are sharing this graphic that shows different versions of how families meet needs again (figure 8.19) in relation to the need for housing.

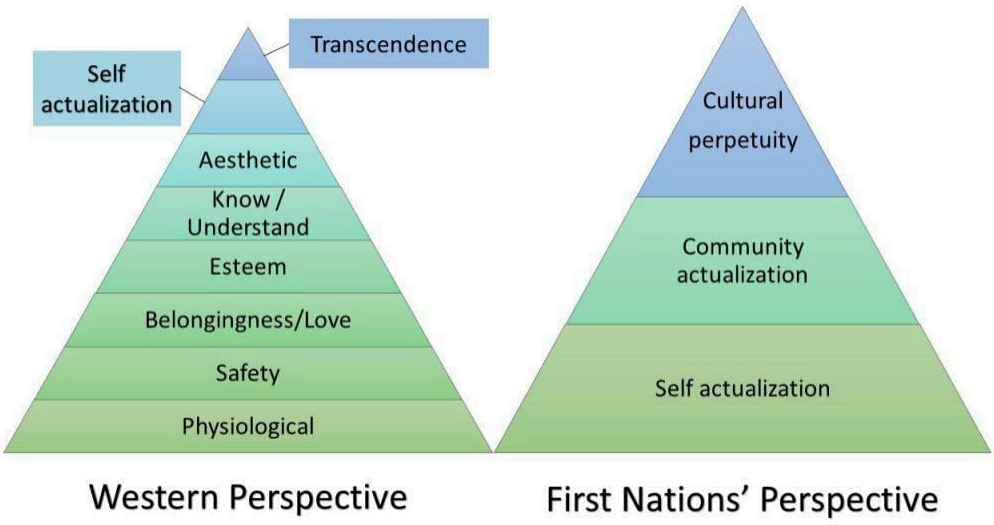


Figure 8.19. Maslow's hierarchy of needs compared to the First Nations' perspective. Maslow's scope of analysis is individual rights and privileges in one lifetime. Indigenous peoples have an expansive concept of time and multiple dimensions of reality. Image description. "Maslow's hierarchy of needs compared to the First Nations' perspective." License: CC BY 4.0. Based on research from Rethinking Learning by Barbara Bray.

The models differ in perspective, but they both emphasize the importance of basic needs, of which shelter is one. Maslow's model on the left places shelter as the foundation of the hierarchy of needs, meaning that it must be met first in order for other needs to be achieved. In the First Nations' perspective on the right, the well-being of the self and of the community is prioritized; well-being includes basic needs for all to be met.

The United Nations, a 193-nation member group founded in 1945, summarizes its mission as "peace, dignity, and equality on a healthy planet." They created a Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which includes the following language:

> Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection (Rosenbaum, n.d.).

There is broad agreement that secure housing is a critical need for families to survive and thrive. While institutional biases that contribute to inequity and lack of secure housing for many families in the United States have decreased, they have not been completely eradicated. Nor have the effects of the prior centuries of discrimination been undone. We must continue to work to understand the past and the present in order to impact the future.

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Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations. 1948. Article 23

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8.7: Going Deeper

Having how equity for families is connected to housing and homes, this page has some additional resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- Learn more about Cardi B's family and home life in her full interviews with Vibe and Global Grind.
- To understand the demographics of who lives in which kind of community, read this article from the Pew Research Center: What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities.
- The state of Oregon hosts a web page dedicated to Permanent Supportive/Supported Housing Resources, which contains some of the federal government's resources about Housing First.
- If you'd like to know more about Creating Moves to Opportunity, which helps families improve their housing options, there is both a webpage and a video you can watch.
- For more on how to assess your environment and its importance to health, watch this TEDMED TALK with Bill Davenhall.
- The Oregon Encyclopedia contains a summary of Black exclusion laws in Oregon.
- To hear the full story about Utah's successful Housing First efforts, listen (or read) here.
- Theaster Gates founded the Rebuild Foundation in 2010, which is a nonprofit organization that encompasses multiple neighborhood improvement projects. To read more about his community work, visit the "Projects" section of his website.
- To learn more about how the work of Artists Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn (aka Haas and Hahn) is funded and organized, watch their TED Talk here.

Reflective Questions

1. Reflect on houselessness and housing insecurity. What do you observe in your own community?
2. What is changing about where families live and the sizes of family households? How does your own experience relate to these changes?
3. What are some institutional barriers to home ownership, and who are those barriers most likely to affect?
4. How are redlining and bluelining related to housing access?
5. How does where you live relate to other aspects of family life, such as health and education?
6. "Housing First" has been successful when implemented. What are the barriers to seeing this practice used more universally?
7. Reflect on the role of stigma in housing access.
8. What are some solutions to the housing challenges that families in the United States face?

Key Terms

- **Affordable housing:** housing that can be accessed and maintained while paying for and meeting other basic needs such as food, transportation, access to work and school, clothing, and health care.
- **Bluelining:** real estate that is considered high risk due to low elevation and flooding due to climate change may not qualify

for loans.

- **Bracero program:** a series of laws and diplomatic agreements initiated in 1942, when the United States signed an agreement with Mexico.
- **Cost-burdened households:** households that pay 30% or more of monthly income toward housing.
- **Discrimination:** the unequal treatment of an individual or group on the basis of their statuses (e.g., age, beliefs, ethnicity, sex).
- **Environmental justice:** focuses on equal protection against hazards and meaningful action to correct past discrimination.
- **Fair Housing Act:** an act that protects people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities.
- **Household size:** all the people occupying a housing unit.
- **Houseless/houselessness:** lacking a permanent place to live.
- **Housing First:** an approach with the belief that people need basic necessities like food and shelter before focusing on other needs such as substance use, employment, or budget.
- **Housing insecurity:** having a place to live but having uncertainty about meeting basic needs or needing to move frequently.
- **Redlining:** the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable or racially occupied.
- **Residential segregation:** the physical separation of two or more groups into different neighborhoods.
- **Renters:** a person who does not own their place of living but pays another party to live in their place of living.
- **Section 8 housing:** a program that authorizes the payment of rental housing assistance to private landlords on behalf of low-income households.
- **Shelters:** places and organizations that provide temporary living space for houseless families and individuals.

Activity: Surviving the Echo Mountain Fire

The video in figure 8.20, made by an Oregon community college student, describes some of the aftereffects of a sudden, unexpected fire near Otis, Oregon, in September 2020. The Echo Mountain fire burned 2,500 acres and destroyed 25% of the 1,241 structures in the area (Yachats News, 2020).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 8.20. Surviving the Echo Mountain Fire [YouTube Video]. A survivor of the Echo Mountain Fire tells her story and analyzes the responses from various helping organizations. Transcript. "Surviving the Echo Mountain Fire" by Marc Brooks. License: CC BY 4.0.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the families who were impacted by the fire?
2. What kind of help can families expect when they live through a fire that destroys their home? What kinds of impacts do their social identities have on the help they receive?
3. How did the services of Echo Mountain Fire Relief, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), private insurance, and the Cascade Relief Team complement each other to help families? What did families need to do for themselves?

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CHAPTER 9: SAFETY AND STABILITY

Learning Objectives

1. Identify macro- and micro-level resources that families need to be safe.
2. Explain what PACEs are and how these relate to the safety of families.
3. Describe what ACEs are and how they impact families.
4. Outline how social supports outside families contribute to the safety of families.
5. Discuss the importance of quality relationships and their contribution to safety and stability.
6. Discuss a wide range of family issues, such as violence and abuse, and how common they are.
7. Analyze family safety and stability from an equity lens.

9.1: Chapter Reading Guide

9.2: What Children and Families Need to Be Safe

9.3: Macro-Level and Micro-Level Factors Related to Safety

9.4: Freedom from Violence and Abuse

9.5: Family Access to Safety and Stability

9.6: Looking Ahead- Restorative Practices

9.7: Going Deeper

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9.1: Chapter Reading Guide

Alexandra Olsen and Elizabeth B. Pearce

In this chapter, you will be reading about various kinds of safety that are important to families. There is a focus on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs). In addition, violence and abuse will be discussed. Social structures that contribute to the protection of families or get in the way of safety will be examined. Restorative practices and restorative justice will be discussed as ways to create safety, prevent harm, and implement justice in ways that involve both survivors and perpetrators.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. Preview those to have an idea of where you are headed. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs):** traumas that occur in an individual's life before they turn 18, which include neglect, abuse, and household difficulties.
- **Child abuse:** the intentional emotional, negligent, physical, or sexual mistreatment of a child by an adult.
- **Elder abuse:** when older people are deprived of care or intentionally harmed by their caretakers.
- **Emotional abuse:** nonphysical maltreatment through verbal language.
- **Epigenetics:** the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work.
- **Intergenerational trauma:** a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are similar to those of the person who experienced the event.
- **Intimate partner violence (IPV):** any incident or pattern of behaviors (physical, psychological, sexual, or verbal) used by one partner to maintain power and control over the relationship.
- **Neglect:** failure to meet a child's basic needs.
- **Physical abuse:** any act, completed or attempted, that physically hurts or injures someone.
- **Protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs):** experiences that help children develop and promote resilience, even if they also have some adverse or traumatic childhood experiences.
- **Rape culture:** a society or environment where there is a culture of disbelief and lack of support for sexual violence survivors through normalizing and trivializing sexual violence despite its prevalent occurrence.
- **Restorative justice:** an intentional way of handling an offense involving three stakeholders within an organization or community: the person(s) who has offended, the person(s) who were harmed, and communities of care and reconciliation.
- **Restorative practices:** a social science that studies how to build, strengthen, and repair relationships among individuals, as well as connections within communities.
- **Sexual abuse:** maltreatment, violation, and exploitation where a perpetrator forces, coerces, or threatens someone into sexual contact for sexual gratification and/or financial benefit.
- **Sexual violence:** making degrading comments, touching in unpleasant means of harm, or addressing a partner in a degrading way during sexual intercourse, which includes marital rape.

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9.2: What Children and Families Need to Be Safe

Alexandra Olsen

Safety and stability are fundamental aspects of both Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and First Nations perspectives on needs, which we discussed in Chapter 3. In Maslow's hierarchy, individuals need physical safety to achieve self-actualization. Similarly, the idea of safety is inherent to First Nations ideas about meeting the community's needs, where the safety of a community is essential to cultural perpetuity.

Maslow's theory and First Nations perspectives show us that safety can be co-created in communities and experienced individually. Safety can be a public policy goal, such as the passage of a law increasing funding for afterschool programs. Organizations, such as services provided to people leaving abusive relationships, also create safety. In relationships, safety grows from the intense love, trust, and connection between child and parent. Finally, individuals can create safety and develop through positive childhood experiences and by learning social and emotional skills.

There are different kinds of safety that individuals, families, and communities experience:

- Physical, which includes access to resources like food and water. It also includes freedom from violence and freedom from anyone touching your body without consent.
- Psychological, which is freedom from excessive worry of physical or emotional harm. This does not mean that bad things never happen. Instead, when people have psychological safety, they feel they can openly communicate with others and find solutions to problems.
- Spiritual, which is when they feel comfortable being themselves because others acknowledge, understand, and engage respectfully with them. Spiritual safety emerges in contexts where there is mutual understanding and support.
- Communal, which is when a person has a sense of belonging and attachment to their family, broader social groups, and families. It also means that people within these social groups are free to express their culture, supported, and able to thrive in perpetuity.

This chapter will explore these kinds of safety and learn what children and families need to be safe. We will look at both macro-level and micro-level aspects. We'll also discuss how freedom from abuse and violence is integral to creating safety but one that many families struggle to obtain. Finally, we'll examine families' barriers to achieving a sense of safety and how policies and communities have progressed on these issues.

Macro-Level and Micro-Level Aspects of Safety

Many factors contribute to families' and individuals' ability to be safe. These include macro-level factors: policies, institutions, communities, and cultures that promote safety and security. Other factors work at the micro-level to create safety and security: close relationships, social service interventions, and individuals' social and emotional skills.

Before we look more in-depth at the macro- and micro-level factors contributing to safety, we will briefly discuss why safety is so important, especially during childhood and adolescence. The safer and more stable families and communities are, the better they will be able to provide their children with protective childhood experiences. These experiences improve children's resilience during adversity and, in some cases, avoid ACEs.

Protective and Compensatory Childhood Experiences

Individuals need safety throughout their life course, particularly during childhood, because of its role in cognitive and emotional development (Morris et al., 2021). Families play a significant role in providing children with experiences that will help them grow into happy, stable, and successful adults. When families and communities have a sense of safety and stability, they can provide children with the security they need to develop into productive adults.

Public health scholars have identified ten **protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs)** that help children develop resilience. These experiences can promote resilience even if children have some adverse or traumatic childhood experiences (Morris et al., 2021). PACEs are fulfilled by:

1. A caregiver who loves them unconditionally.
2. A best friend who they can trust and have fun with.
3. An adult who is not their parent that they can trust and turn to for advice.
4. Regular opportunities to help others through volunteering or participation in other community projects.
5. Physical activities and/or sports.
6. Social groups, such as places of worship, scout groups, community groups.
7. Hobbies, such as arts and crafts, reading, debate team, or playing a musical instrument.
8. A school with the resources and academic experiences that they need to learn.
9. A home that is clean, safe, and where there is enough to eat.
10. A home with routines and fair, clear, and consistently enforced rules.



Figure 9.1. Many of the PACEs involve relationships, including Number 4 on the list: "regular opportunities to help others, through volunteering or participation in other community projects." Photograph by Joel Muniz on Unsplash. License: Unsplash License.

The ability to provide children with these experiences is directly related to macro- and micro-level factors associated with safety. These experiences can only exist at the macro-level if families have access to resources—such as food, money, access to quality schools, and time to engage in the community. At the micro-level, these experiences are born out of healthy relationships and a sense of community, as pictured in figure 9.1—children knowing they have people who care about them. If we want children to grow into resilient adults, then we need families and communities to have the support they need. Families with support can provide children with needed resources and build strong relationships.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

When families don't have the things they need to be safe, children are more likely to be exposed to **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**, which are traumas that occur in an individual's life before they turn 18, including neglect, abuse, and household difficulties. The greater the number of ACEs that an individual has experienced, the greater the likelihood of poor social, emotional, and health outcomes in the short and long term. Specifically, researchers have identified 10 ACEs (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021):

1. Emotional abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Witnessing violence against mother/stepmother
5. Substance abuse in the household
6. Mental illness in household
7. Parental separation or divorce
8. Incarcerated household member
9. Emotional neglect
10. Physical neglect

Hudson Center for Health Equity and Quality has developed an online calculator for ACEs where you can calculate your ACE score. This online tool is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Kaiser ACEs Study but is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. You can access the online calculator here.

ACEs impact children in the short and long term. In the short term, children may internalize or externalize their emotions related to the trauma that they have experienced. Children may respond to these experiences by externalizing their emotions, a psychological defense mechanism in which they direct uncomfortable feelings at others or "act out." They may engage in inappropriate or disruptive behavior or become diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or conduct disorders. In contrast, children may respond to these issues by internalizing their emotions, a similar defense mechanism that involves holding in or hiding their feelings. Children who internalize may experience anxiety and/or depression. In both cases, children's neurodevelopment is disrupted, which leads to a greater likelihood of long-term impacts from these experiences (McLaughlin et al., 2015).

To focus on the long-term effects of trauma as well as the ways that communities can address safety and trauma, you may watch a video featuring the former Surgeon General of California and pediatrician Dr. Nadine Burke Harris in the"Going Deeper" section. Childhood Trauma Over the Lifetime offers a discussion and analysis of ACEs impact on health in the long term, but also ways that communities can address these issues to support families.

In the long term, ACEs can impact health across the lifetime. Figure 9.2 shows the pathway from ACEs to poor health outcomes and well-being over the life course.

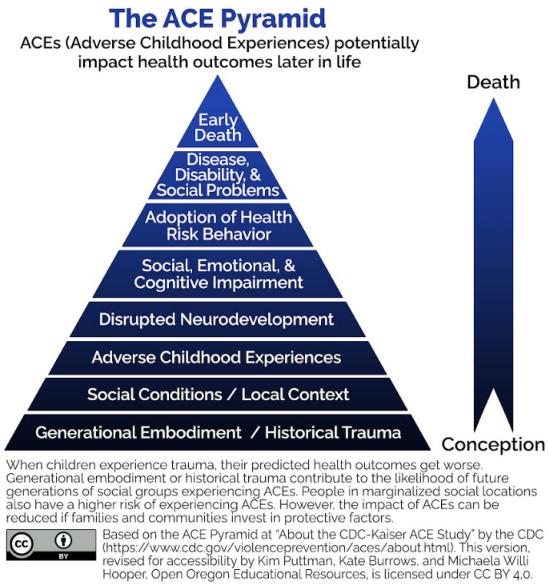


Figure 9.2. The ACE pyramid shows how ACEs end up influencing long-term health outcomes. Image description. "The ACE Pyramid" by Kim Puttman, Kate Burrows, and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0.

Macro- and micro-level factors that promote safety directly connect to ACEs. ACEs arise from a combination of social conditions and individual interactions. For instance, when we look at the bottom of the ACE pyramid in figure 9.2, we can see how issues such as historical trauma or other social/community conditions can lead to ACEs. These are macro-factors that indicate a lack of safety for families.

At the same time, the extent to which ACEs impact a child depends on their exposure to PACEs. Many of these protective factors function at the micro-level—quality relationships and a sense of support—and connect back to the broader needs for families to access resources. Not every child exposed to trauma will have significant and severe long-term negative consequences. However, the greater the number of protective factors children have, the lower the likelihood that ACEs will have severe long-term outcomes.

Public health initiatives to address the impact of ACEs and trauma in children are crucial. Addressing this impact requires the government and organizations to put resources towards helping families and educating families on the effects of ACEs. Additionally, families must be open to learning skills to heal from trauma and improve their relationships. An example of what this can look like in practice can be found in the box below, highlighting the group Creating Community Resilience in Douglas County, Oregon. Moving forward, we'll look at how access to resources and families' community and individual relationships influence their sense of safety.

In Focus: Creating Community Resilience

In Douglas County, Oregon, Creating Community Resilience aims to inform the community about the impact of ACEs and integrate trauma-informed practices into local schools, county agencies, and nonprofits.

One of the strengths of this group is that they bring together a wide range of community groups to accomplish these goals. The involved organizations include local school districts, the juvenile department, health care providers, social service agencies, the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and Umpqua Community College. All these agencies play a role in educating the public, implementing trauma-informed practices, and working with other community groups to spread the impact of this work. Regularly, members of this group will give ACE Interface trainings to local groups. These trainings explain the Kaiser ACE study, discuss protective factors against ACEs, and provide information about how community members can address these issues.

They also hold "Lunch and Learn" monthly events for community members. At these lunches, community members can learn more about trauma-related issues and the work being done in Douglas County to address trauma. Through all of this work, Creating Community Resilience is taking active steps to mitigate the impact of trauma in Douglas County by both strengthening the skills of local professionals to address these issues in a wide range of contexts and educating the general public.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=935#h5p-37

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9.3: Macro-Level and Micro-Level Factors Related to Safety

Alexandra Olsen and Dio Morales

As we've already noted, the level of safety that an individual or family experiences is directly related to macro-level factors: policies, institutions, community, and cultures. These factors are crucial in creating social support so families can access the resources they need: food, water, health care, money, and others.

In this section, we explore two critical ideas related to macro-level factors. First, we will discuss how social support can increase families' physical and mental safety. Finally, we will examine how the interconnections between various macro-factors promote safety.

Similar to our discussion of macro-factors, the micro-factors that create safety are also important for families to truly feel secure. This section explores the role of quality relationships in creating safety for families. Together, these factors help families have physical, psychological, spiritual, and communal safety.

Social Supports that Increase Safety for Families

How do society and institutions support or get in the way of families getting what they need? Public policies that expand social support are essential to increasing families' physical, psychological, spiritual, and communal safety.

For example, let's look at how the passage of paid parental leave policies promotes and creates safety within families. Paid parental leave policies provide parents time off of work while still receiving their salary after giving birth or following an adoption or foster care placement. The period of parental leave varies from four to 85 weeks, depending on the state or country.

Parental leave policies support families in their physical, psychological, and spiritual safety. Paid parental leave increases the physical safety of members of the family. If a parent gives birth, they have time off to physically recover. The child gains valuable time to bond and be physically close to their parents, which is crucial to developing healthy attachment and psychological safety. The ability to stay home and bond with their child without worrying about whether they'll be able to pay their bills also provides parents with a sense of psychological safety. Parents have a sense of spiritual safety because of paid parental leave. They feel like society at large acknowledges and understands the demands of a new family member by providing this benefit.

Together, all of these forms of safety increase communal safety. Public policies that create safety help children develop a sense of belonging and attachment to their families. Parental leave is one of many examples of how good public policy can give families a deeper and more comprehensive sense of safety in the short and long term.

Unfortunately, the relative lack of social support for families and individuals in the United States is a major barrier to families getting what they need and creating a true sense of safety. From the earliest stages of life, comprehensive policies are absent to support families.

Safety Nets

While we looked at the example of how families can have a greater sense of safety from paid parental leave, these policies are not universally accessible in the United States. In fact, as of 2021, only nine states and Washington, D.C., have paid parental leave laws, which range from 4 to 12 weeks off and provide anywhere between 50% and 100% of a parent's pay (KFF, 2021). Similarly, only 35% of all U.S. employees have employers who offer paid parental leave. Most of these employees are in the top 25% of all income earners. These statistics show that the private sector is not compensating for the lack of federal or state laws guaranteeing these benefits (KFF, 2021).

A "safety net," or safeguard that protects families from hardships, becomes even more important when a country lacks social supports such as parental leave or universal health care. A safety net provides services such as housing or food assistance to families who need it. The lack of publicly funded family health programs, as well as a very limited safety net in the United States, has consequences for families, particularly low-income families in states without these protections.

This lack of a robust social safety net continues to impact families over time, which we can see, for example, when looking at the

state of anti-poverty programs in the United States. The U.S. minimum wage remains well below what is required to adequately provide for a family as the cost of living continues to increase. Social safety nets have consistently been cut or are under threat.

Welfare reform in the 1990s is an example of cuts to social programs. Congress changed laws to limit the length of time families could receive this kind of assistance. Another example is the more recent (unsuccessful) attacks on food assistance programs (Hsu, 2020). Many families remain in poverty despite the efforts of remaining social programs—especially when looking at families headed by single mothers or members of oppressed groups.

Poverty impacts every aspect of family life, affecting the family's physical, psychological, spiritual, and community safety. These issues highlight one of the main reasons representation is important. (See Chapter 6 for more about representation.) If the issues faced by a diverse range of families are not being represented or heard by lawmakers, then families and groups won't have their needs met. And, if families and groups don't have their needs met, then safety remains elusive.

Unlike in the United States, robust social support for families is the norm globally, especially in other high-income nations. For instance, the United States and Papua New Guinea are the only two countries without paid parental leave laws. If we look at other issues, such as child poverty, the United States has higher rates than many other high-income nations, as shown in figure 9.3. Researchers have consistently found that the United States underinvests in its children and families compared to other wealthy countries. This underinvestment leads to negative economic and educational outcomes (Smeeding & Thévenot, 2016).

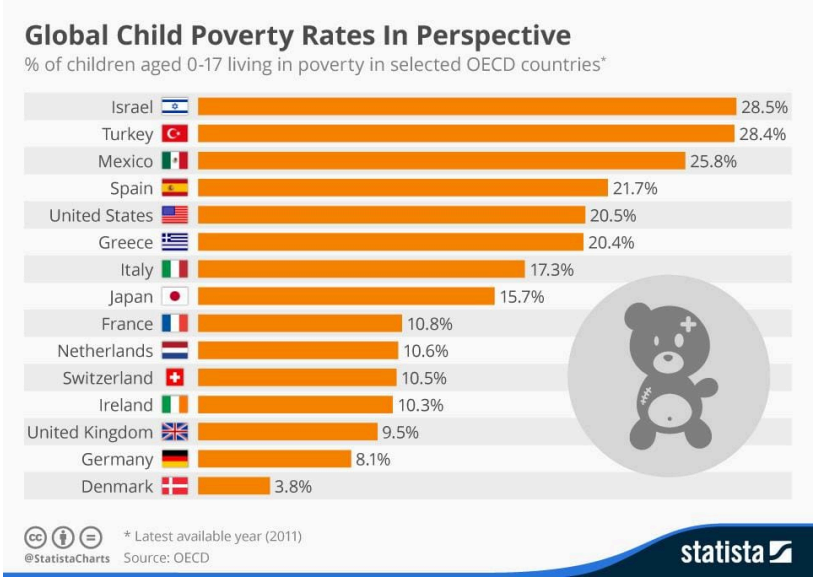


Figure 9.3. Child poverty is significantly higher in the United States than it is in many other high-income nations shown in this 2016 data. As of 2022 (the most recent year for which data are available in 2024, the child poverty rate remains at 20.4% in the U.S., unchanged. "Global Child Poverty Rates in Perspective" by Niall McCarthy. License: CC-BY-SA 4.0.

In these other wealthy countries, we can see how policies such as cash support and employment assistance help groups disproportionately likely to be in poverty in the United States, such as single mothers. If America wants to increase safety within families and communities, it is worth considering what we can learn from the examples of other nations that have increased social support for families.

Interconnection of Macro-Level Safety Factors

A central question addressed in this textbook is, "What do families need?" In answering that question, we examine various aspects of society that contribute to safety. In earlier chapters, we've discussed several macro-factors that promote safety in families:

- Chapter Five discusses communities of belonging;
- Chapter Seven highlights access to quality physical and mental health care; and
- Chapter Eight focuses on affordable and safe housing.

In the following chapters, we'll expand upon this by looking at the ways that access to food (Chapter 10) and water (Chapter 10)

and equal justice (Chapter 11) contribute to physical safety and improve the health and wellness of families. At the same time, they give families a deeper sense of agency, belonging, and respect that positively impacts psychological, spiritual, and communal safety.

In many ways, true safety is created when families have all of their needs met. Yet, this can be difficult because many of these needs are related. For instance, it is unlikely that a family in the United States will have access to quality health care, quality education, or affordable and safe housing if they are struggling economically. In many ways, the most privileged members of society have the greatest access to safety. This is because they can get the majority (if not all) of their needs met. Still, many of these factors are interrelated. Consequently, even a modest increase in meeting one of these needs can increase the safety of a family. For instance, increasing access to healthy food and clean water for young children can improve physical and mental health outcomes and educational outcomes.

There are plenty of examples of how families and communities mobilize available resources to create safety, even when they lack other necessary resources or equal protection. Chosen families, often created in LGBTQIA+ communities, as shown in figure 9.4, are a great example. In chosen families, members create a culture that centers around sharing resources. This cooperation can help to compensate for the lack of access to representation in government, equal justice, quality health care, and equal opportunities in the labor market. These practices, in turn, create an improved sense of physical, psychological, spiritual, and communal safety amongst participants—even though society may not be broadly safe or welcoming.



Figure 9.4. While the idea of chosen families became best known in the 20th century via LGBTQIA+ families, many other kinds of families choose members not related by blood or legal ties. "Capital Trans Pride Washington, DC USA 5125" by Ted Eytan. License: CC-SA-2.0.

Quality Relationships

Micro-factors are equally important in establishing a sense of safety in families. Quality relationships with family and community members (friends, mentors, coaches, colleagues) are important for children and adults. Families need a sense of safety with one another. They also need a broader sense of security that develops through positive connections with people in their social sphere.

Childhood and adolescence are periods where youth can benefit from positive social relationships. In Chapter Four, we look at the concept of nurturance, highlighting how parenting and caregiving can be important responsibilities taken on within families. Baumrind's parenting styles strongly argue that the authoritative parenting style can help create safety for children.

In Focus: Learning to Catch Each Other

Twenty-five years ago, I met my husband at Smith Rock State Park. Since then, we have rock-climbed with our kids all over the world. One of our safety devices is a GriGri, which a belayer uses to catch a climber if they fall (figure 9.5). Being tied to your loved ones with a rope and protecting their physical safety with this hand-sized piece of metal is a powerful responsibility. Some of our best conversations with our kids are on these trips, but we usually aren't talking about the climbing routes; we talk about

everything else in our lives. The connection we feel as a family is a big part of what makes the GriGri work.



Figure 9.5. The GriGri symbolizes care and safety in this family; building quality relationships are an important aspect of safety. By Dio Morales. License: CC BY 4.0.

Children need supportive, emotionally responsive parents who clearly explain and consistently enforce fair rules. When parents do this, it creates a sense of safety by providing children with psychological safety. Children know what to expect if they break the rules. They also generally feel connected to and supported by their parents, trusting their parents will openly communicate with them. Fair rules also create a sense of spiritual safety where children know their parents will treat them with respect. These aspects work together to provide children with communal security—a sense of belonging within their families.

The research on attachment theory, also discussed in Chapter 4, similarly connects back to the idea of safety. For children to have a secure attachment, an indicator that they feel safe, parents need to be able to help children regulate their emotions. Regulation of emotions also helps children to feel deep or unconditional love from their caregivers. Children know they will be supported and safe within their relationship with their caregiver.

Finally, children and adolescents need relationships outside of the family. Many of the PACEs for youth are related to being involved in groups where they can develop friendships and engage with mentors. This is one of the reasons that mentoring programs, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, have been so effective. These programs have been successful in helping youth stay in school, avoid contact with the juvenile justice system, and build friendships within the communities. Relationships outside the family allow youth to broaden their sense of safety by helping them find new places where they can experience physical, psychological, and spiritual safety. These experiences can give youth a broader sense of communal safety. These experiences also give children a sense of connection to a much wider culture than they could get in their immediate social networks.

Adults within families also need quality relationships with family to have a sense of safety—whether these families are biological or chosen. Relationships outside the family provide adults with a broader sense of connection to their communities, creating a deeper sense of communal safety. At the same time, issues can arise in families—such as intimate partner violence (IPV) or economic struggles—where external support is even more crucial. When families experience problems like this, connections to those outside of the family can help provide members with physical, psychological, and spiritual safety. This kind of safety can be crucial to families getting through tough times or helping them adjust after traumatic events.

Still, the broader social context influences many of these micro-level factors. For instance, it may be harder for a parent to develop a secure attachment to their child if they immediately have to return to work due to lack of paid parental leave. Similarly, while being involved in extracurricular activities and mentoring programs can significantly benefit youth, these activities and programs are not universally accessible. In both examples, it is clear that social supports have a tremendous impact on the level of safety experienced by families.

Comprehension Self Check

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9.4: Freedom from Violence and Abuse

Alexandra Olsen

Freedom from violence and abuse is an essential aspect of families' ability to create safety. Violence and abuse are common issues for families. They are significant barriers that keep families from creating a true sense of safety. Similarly, many types of families experience violence and abuse—both those who have resources and are served well by social institutions and those who are not. Even if a family has many of their macro-level needs met, families are prevented from creating positive and compensatory experiences for children if there is violence and abuse. Violence and abuse also can prevent the development of quality relationships within and outside of the family.

This section looks at common violence and abuse: IPV, sexual violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and intergenerational trauma. First, we'll define these terms and discuss how common these types of violence and abuse are. Next, we'll outline the problems that must be addressed if we want all families and individuals to experience safety and stability. One of the major takeaways from this discussion is that institutions are critical to addressing the impact of violence and abuse on families, as their role is to promote safety. If institutions can effectively promote safety, families and individuals will be better positioned.

It is important to note that these are serious and difficult topics to discuss, mainly because these social problems impact many people. Still, by better understanding the dynamics of violence and abuse, we can find ways to make our society safer for all individuals.

Intimate Partner Violence

The United States recognizes IPV as a significant public health issue. This type of violence is universally condemned due to its heinous nature. **Intimate partner violence (IPV)** is defined as any incident or pattern of behaviors (physical, psychological, sexual, or verbal) used by one partner to maintain power and control over the relationship.

Historically, in the United States, IPV has been considered an act of violence committed by men toward women. While heterosexual women commonly experience IPV, it can occur to people of any gender and sexuality. Young women are particularly at risk as IPV declines with age. Perpetrators of IPV are most often heterosexual men. Engaging in IPV has been linked with being unemployed, low income, involved with aggressive peers, and having conduct problems or antisocial behavior (Capaldi et al., 2012). Figure 9.6 shows the gender contrast (in a binary system) between the rates of experience and reporting of IPV.



Figure 9.6. IPV is extremely common, especially for women. "Fast Facts: Preventing Intimate Partner Violence" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Public domain.

There are three kinds of IPV:

1. Physical violence consists of touching or painful physical contact, including intimidation of the victim through pushing, slapping, hair pulling, arm twisting, disfiguration, bruising, burning, beating, punching, and use of weapons.
2. Sexual violence consists of making degrading comments, touching in unpleasant means of harm, addressing a partner in a

degrading way during sexual intercourse, and marital rape.
3. Psychological and emotional violence consists of threatening, intimidating, killing of pets, deprivation of fundamental needs (food, clothing, shelter, sleep), and distorting reality through control and manipulation.

Many abusers may use a combination of these tactics to establish power and control over the person they are abusing, frequently using physical and sexual violence to reinforce the subtle methods of physical and emotional abuse.

Community organizations have worked to provide services to help people experiencing IPV. These organizations offer a wide range of services to individuals and families experiencing this kind of violence: safety planning, counseling, legal assistance, shelter, and other social services. These organizations provide services that are integral to helping individuals safely leave abusive relationships. These resources are essential because the threat of violence is highest when a victim of IPV leaves their abuser.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence includes harassment, assault, and rape. It is a common misperception that women are at greater risk of sexual violence from strangers. In reality, women are most likely to experience sexual violence from men they are intimate with or know. More than 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes. Nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 38 men have reported experiencing completed or attempted rape, and 1 in 14 men was made to penetrate someone (completed or attempted) during their lifetime. Men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of sexual violence. Still, similar to IPV, sexual violence can affect individuals of any gender or sexuality. Men are significantly less likely to report sexual assault, so these numbers may be higher.

College students are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence compared to non-students. Male college-aged students (18 to 24) are 78% more likely than non-students of the same age to be victims of rape or sexual assault (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022a). Female college-aged students (18 to 24) are 20% less likely than non-students of the same age to be victims of rape or sexual assault (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022a).

There are several reasons that sexual violence is rampant, especially on residential four-year campuses. On many campuses, students lack knowledge of reporting sexual violence when it occurs. When it does get reported, colleges and universities rarely punish perpetrators of sexual violence and remove them from campus. College students engage in unsupervised heavy alcohol consumption, especially in Greek life and high-powered athletic programs. This party culture creates an environment where predators have more opportunities to assault people sexually. Finally, there is a lack of education about consent.

One of the significant issues in the United States is that our society has failed to adequately address sexual violence and support victims. In fact, out of every 1,000 instances of rape, only 13 cases get referred to a prosecutor, and only seven cases will lead to a felony conviction (Rape Abuse and Incest National Network, n.d.). Instead of a culture where institutions hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable, American society is one where rape culture is common. **Rape culture** refers to a society or environment where there is a culture of disbelief and lack of support for sexual violence survivors through normalizing and trivializing sexual violence despite its prevalent occurrence.

There are many examples of rape culture in institutions. Rape culture is when administrators ask, “What were you wearing?” or “How much did you have to drink?” as a student is trying to report a rape that occurred at a fraternity party to a campus administrator.

Rape culture is also present in the criminal justice system. The 2015 case against rapist Brock Turner highlighted how rape culture can manifest. Turner brutally raped an unconscious college student behind a dumpster and was caught in the act by two men. During the trial, Turner’s father declared that he should not have his life ruined over “20 minutes of action.” Ultimately, the California judge gave Turner only three years of probation (Stack, 2016). This example captures how rape culture exists in individual attitudes and how institutions function. Despite the egregious and substantiated nature, Turner faced few consequences for his actions, and the court system did not treat this as a serious offense. More broadly, this case reflects the dismal statistics on prosecution and convictions of rape in the United States.

Finally, rape culture can be found in pop culture, such as lyrics in popular music. A particularly blatant example of this is found in Rick Ross’s 2013 song “U.O.E.N.O.” In this song, he raps, “Put molly all in her champagne, she ain’t even know it / I took her home, and I enjoyed that, she ain’t even know it.” These lyrics trivialize sexual assault and glorify rape. These examples show how rape culture is deeply embedded in societal institutions and must be challenged if we want all individuals and families to feel safe.

Child Abuse

Child abuse is the intentional emotional, negligent, physical, or sexual mistreatment of a child by an adult (Bell, 2013). **Neglect** is the failure to meet a child's basic needs. Child abuse is common. At least one in seven children has experienced child abuse or neglect in the past year (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022b). One of the many reasons these statistics are so concerning is that child abuse is trauma. According to SAMHSA (2014), trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

Abuse comes in many forms, including physical, emotional/verbal, and sexual abuse. According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2021), **physical abuse** is defined as any act, completed or attempted, that physically hurts or injures a child. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network also describes that acts of physical abuse include hitting, kicking, scratching, pulling hair, and more. Child Protection Services typically get reports of bruises and other noticeable marks when investigating a report of physical abuse.

Emotional abuse is nonphysical maltreatment of a child through verbal language. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) states that emotional abuse includes humiliation, threatening, ignoring, manipulating, and more (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2017). Abusers can combine emotional abuse with other forms, like physical and sexual abuse. Most reports of emotional abuse are harder to prove; thus, physical or sexual abuse tends to be the main cause of removal from a home.

Sexual abuse is maltreatment, violation, and exploitation where a perpetrator forces, coerces, or threatens a child into sexual contact for sexual gratification and/or financial benefit. Sexual abuse includes molestation, statutory rape, prostitution, pornography, exposure, incest, or other sexually exploitative activities. (American Society for the Positive Care of Children, 2017). Sexual abuse is also a common ACE. About 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys experience child sexual abuse at some point in childhood (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022c). Like other forms of child abuse, sexual abuse is overwhelmingly perpetrated by someone close to the child. Data show that 91% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child or their family knows (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022c).

Abuse does not always have to be physical, sexual, or verbal assault. It can also be neglect. According to the NSPCC, **neglect** is the failure to meet a child's basic needs.

Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse is when older people are deprived of care or intentionally harmed by their caretakers. Abuse, including neglect and exploitation, is experienced by about 1 in 10 people aged 60 and older who live at home. Elder abuse and neglect are under-reported in the United States for many reasons, including fear and embarrassment by the elderly (O'Connor & Rowe, 2005). Elder victims of abuse risks include functional disability, lack of social supports, poor physical health, cognitive impairment, mental health issues, lower socioeconomic status, gender, age, and financial dependence (Pillemar et al., 2016). There is not one specific cause for elderly abuse and neglect. These reasons include various dynamics, cultural norms, negligence, and lack of education and support (Muehlbauer & Crane, 2006). Potential causes of abuse could be due to mental illness, substance abuse, and the need to abuse the perpetrator (Pillemar et al., 2016).

Forms of elder abuse can take the following shapes (National Center on Elder Abuse, 2005):

- Physical abuse: use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment.
- Sexual abuse: nonconsensual sexual contact of any kind with an elderly person.
- Emotional abuse: infliction of anguish, pain, or distress through verbal or non-verbal acts.
- Financial/material exploitation: illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets.
- Neglect: refusal, or failure, to fulfill any part of a person's obligations or duties to an elderly person.
- Abandonment: desertion of an elderly person by an individual who has physical custody of the elder or by a person who has assumed responsibility for providing care to the elder.
- Self-neglect: behaviors of an elderly person that threaten the elder's health or safety.

There are several strategies that can help prevent elder abuse. These strategies include learning about and educating others on the signs of elder abuse, providing help for overburdened caregivers, listening to older adults and their caregivers about their struggles, and reporting abuse or suspected abuse to adult protective services.

Intergenerational Trauma

The American Psychological Association defines **intergenerational trauma** as "a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are similar to those of the person himself or herself" (American Psychological Association, 2022). They note that these reactions can vary but often include (American Psychological Association, 2022):

- Shame
- Increased anxiety and guilt
- A heightened sense of vulnerability and helplessness
- Low self-esteem
- Depression and suicidality
- Substance abuse
- Dissociation
- Hypervigilance
- Intrusive thoughts
- Difficulty with relationships and attachment to others
- Difficulty in regulating aggression
- Extreme reactivity to stress

Many groups have experienced intergenerational trauma, including descendants of Holocaust survivors, Rwandan genocide survivors, Native American boarding school survivors, and enslaved persons. Scientists think that trauma responses are passed down by parents and grandparents who model and teach relationship skills, behaviors, values, and beliefs. There is also some evidence that the transmission of these reactions may be biological (Yehuda et al., 2015).

Epigenetics is the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible. They do not change your DNA sequence, but they can change how your body reads a DNA sequence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022d). A 2016 study found evidence of epigenetic changes transmitted across generations to descendants of Holocaust survivors. This was the first human evidence that intergenerational trauma may also have a biological mechanism (Yehuda et al., 2015).

Regardless of the means of transmission—social, biological, or both—intergenerational trauma can threaten a family's sense of safety and create problems within families. This kind of trauma may impact the bonds grandparents, parents, and children can form with one another, frequently making these relationships difficult and emotionally stunted. At the same time, more significant issues can emerge. These include suicidality, substance use disorders, and difficulty regulating aggression. These problems can lead to negative outcomes like ACEs and family instability. The research on intergenerational trauma is still being done. We still have much to learn about how it functions. Consequently, strategies to address intergenerational trauma are also in the early stages of development. Even without specific evidence-based treatments, therapy can address intergenerational trauma.

Comprehension Self Check

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9.5: Family Access to Safety and Stability

Alexandra Olsen

Why do some families have more access to what they need to be safe and stable? And what can be done to address these resource gaps between families? This final section of the chapter explores why some families don't have access to what they need.

Systemic perspectives on inequality highlight how classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination are built into our social structure. These systemic inequalities make it so that marginalized groups don't have equal access to safety and stability. These macro-factors directly impact micro-level factors, such as the ability to have quality family relationships.

There are also significant barriers to addressing violence and abuse at the micro-level that are integral to ensuring that families are safe and stable. Finally, we'll look at a few examples of how policies, organizations, and individuals have tried to address these issues.

Limiting Factors for Safety and Stability

In the previous section, we looked at how interconnected factors promote safety. When families lack an essential resource—food, shelter, or health care—they experience increased vulnerability. But why do some families have a deeper sense of safety and stability than others? Much of the reason that some families are more able to access safety and stability than others directly relates to systemic inequalities in society, including classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism.

Quality family relationships and access to resources are intertwined. For example, if a parent has to work 60 to 70 hours a week to support their family, they have less time for self and family, and may have strained relationships with their partner and children.

Systemic inequalities also directly impact the quality of family relationships. For instance, more Black children grow up without a father in the home today than during slavery, primarily due to mass incarceration and the racially motivated War on Drugs (Alexander, 2010). Another example can be seen in the 2014 murder of Eric Garner, which left five children fatherless. A combination of racist institutional policies allowing chokeholds and racial biases led to Garner's children losing their father to police violence. These are examples of macro-level policies and systemic inequality impacting families on the most intimate, personal levels.

At the micro-level, families' lack of safety and stability also stems from IPV and child abuse. Despite increased services to address IPV, many places in the country don't have access to services to help victims leave an abusive relationship. This is particularly an issue in rural areas. This lack of resources connects back to the macro-level factors we discussed above, where some groups have significantly greater access to resources than other communities.

Additionally, funding for social services is generally tenuous. Many organizations that address IPV do not have enough resources to meet service demands. Numerous factors contribute to these shortages, including cuts in grant funding, unstable fundraising, or overworked staff.

Even when victims have access to services, it can be tough to leave an abusive relationship because of the power and control an abuser has over their victim. Social structures may reinforce this power dynamic. For example, many religious doctrines contain patriarchal values that dictate a husband's power or control over a wife. While it can be hard for the victim to psychologically and emotionally break away from their abuser, they also face physical risk when leaving a relationship where there is IPV. Remember, the risk of homicide by an abusive partner is highest when someone is leaving the relationship.

Just as there are barriers to addressing IPV, there are also barriers to addressing child abuse. More child abuse occurs than is reported to official agencies responsible for addressing this issue. Scholars commonly refer to this gap as the "dark figure" of child abuse. Even if child protective services identify children experiencing abuse, these experiences can also be traumatic and expose them to more trauma. This is especially true if they're placed into foster care.

Addressing Barriers to Safety and Stability

So, how can we address barriers to promoting and creating safety and stability? Families need robust social support. Families directly benefit and become safer when we increase access to financial resources, food, shelter, and other basic needs. These improvements can also not be completely effective unless we work to address the legacies and current manifestations of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression within our society and institutions. Otherwise, we will only see a reimagining of old systems of oppression in new forms.

For example, we can see how Black families have been continually impacted by institutional racism across U.S. history despite reforms: slavery, sharecropping, Jim Crow laws, redlining, and mass incarceration. If we truly want all groups to experience safety, we need to dismantle the systems that lead to some groups having significantly better outcomes and experiences with institutions.



Figure 9.7. Education is key to helping parents keep their children safe. It can happen in informal settings, as pictured here, as well as in more formal settings with teachers, medical professionals, community members, children, and parents. “ACS-FAP Helps Fort Campbell Prevent Child Abuse” by Defense Visual Information Distribution Service. Public domain.

Education, as pictured in figure 9.7, is integral to preventing, identifying, and effectively addressing issues such as violence and abuse. Efforts to educate childcare providers, teachers, and medical providers about the signs of child abuse can help the people who are most likely to interact with children notice the signs of abuse and intervene.

At the same time, broader education about IPV can help people identify early warning signs of abuse. Education can also help people know how to appropriately respond if they or one of their loved ones is in an abusive relationship. Education is also crucial for helping families create healthy relationships within and outside of their families. This is especially vital for groups who have experienced historical traumas that may be passed down across generations.

In Focus: Why Domestic Violence Victims Stay

Watch the TED Talk “Why Domestic Violence Victims Don’t Leave” by Leslie Morgan Steiner to learn more about barriers to exiting abusive relationships (figure 9.8).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 9.8. Why domestic violence victims don't leave [YouTube Video]. Even when physical violence escalates, it can be extremely difficult for someone to leave a relationship where IPV is occurring. Transcript. "Why Domestic Violence Victims Don't Leave" by TED. License: Standard YouTube License.

While watching, consider the following questions: How can education about IPV help prevent it? What obstacles exist when a victim wants to leave an abusive relationship? What did you learn from listening to Leslie Morgan Steiner's experience with abuse?

Accountability and Law Enforcement

One of the big critiques of our response to IPV and sexual violence is the lack of accountability and consequences for those who commit these acts. The mechanisms within the criminal justice system to hold perpetrators accountable are relatively weak and incomplete.

Police may lack the training to respond appropriately to IPV and sexual assault calls. Even when police have training on these issues, they often fail to properly handle calls that are suspected of IPV or sexual assault. The 2021 Gaby Petito and Brian Laundrie case was a well-known example of this. In this case, officers came under fire for not adhering to department protocols for domestic violence situations. At the same time, many police do not see addressing social issues as a central part of their job. They see themselves as enforcers of the law rather than a professional who intervenes in the relationships of others.

In addition, while the courts may grant you a restraining order against someone who has abused or assaulted you, they cannot effectively enforce these orders. Many abuse survivors tell stories of continuing to be harassed or stalked by their abuser even after they got this protection order. In other cases, the restraining orders are only temporary because there is not enough evidence of misconduct for permanent restraining orders. If the situation escalates to the point of pressing criminal charges against the perpetrator, there is no guarantee that prosecutors will pursue the case or hold the perpetrator accountable in a way that a survivor finds meaningful.

If a case gets in front of a judge, the trial process is not easy. Many survivors of sexual violence feel uncomfortable testifying and facing their attacker. Survivors of IPV may not want to be involved or have conflicting feelings about being involved in the court process, especially if they still love or want to be with their abusive partner. Even if convicted, punishment is punitive and frequently not focused on repairing damage or helping survivors heal. This is not to say that all survivors are unhappy with how domestic abuse or sexual assault trials resolve. It is the case, though, that many survivors feel that the criminal justice system does not sufficiently repair harm or bring justice to their experiences.

Comprehension Self Check

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9.6: Looking Ahead- Restorative Practices

Alexandra Olsen and Elizabeth B. Pearce

The barriers to effectively addressing these kinds of violence are complex and not easily fixed within our current system. Consequently, what role could alternative systems play in addressing these problems?

Restorative practices are an emerging social science, evolved from ancient practices, that studies how to build, strengthen, and repair relationships among individuals, as well as connections within communities. The practices focus on building connections, accountability, and commitments through participatory learning and decision-making. Specifically, restorative practices can provide some justice to people that have been harmed via systemic oppression.

While more preventative in nature, restorative practices has emerged from **restorative justice,** which is an intentional way handling an offense involving three stakeholders within an organization or community: the person(s) who has offended, the person(s) who were harmed, and communities of care and reconciliation (Wachtel, 2016).

Restorative justice has roots in ancient and Indigenous practices employed in a wide variety of cultures, from Native American and First Nation Canadian to African, Asian, Celtic, Hebrew, Arab, and many others (Eagle, 2001; Goldstein, 2006; Haarala, 2004; Mbambo & Skelton, 2003; Mirsky, 2004; Roujanavong, 2005; Wong, 2005).

Restorative practices are most effective when they are used holistically to build relationships within organizations or within communities. This means using them in a proactive way and not just when harm has occurred. Structures that support the building of connection through authentic communication and social capital that is shared by all members of the community can decrease the amount of harm that occurs (Davey, 2007).

For instance, restorative justice has become a central part of discussions about reforming the criminal justice system. Restorative justice centers the survivor, considering what they need to experience healing. It also involves the perpetrator's participation, requiring them to recognize the harm they did in holding them accountable. More recently, the Center for Court Innovation published a report on the state of nationwide restorative justice approaches to IPV. Examples of restorative programs noted in this report include peacemaking circles, family group conferences, and support circles. If you would like to access the full report, you can do so by clicking this link: A National Portrait of Restorative Approaches to Intimate Partner Violence.

These programs are very different from a criminal justice approach. One of the reasons that groups have begun these practices is due to the inadequacies of the traditional criminal justice system in resolving these issues (Center for Court Innovation, 2019). Unlike the court system, restorative justice centers the survivor rather than the state. It recognizes the agency of survivors and their need to feel safe in the wake of these forms of violence. It also recognizes that healing can look different to different people. At the same time, restorative justice requires the perpetrator to participate actively and engage in an accountability process. More broadly, restorative justice engages communities in their efforts to address IPV by shifting the culture around IPV.

Participation in restorative justice interventions is voluntary and may not be appropriate in all situations, especially if this is not the survivor's wish. Even so, restorative justice provides an alternate framework, which is worth considering as a means to address some common complaints with the criminal justice approach to IPV.

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9.7: Going Deeper

Alexandra Olsen and Monica Olvera

Now that you have read about the kinds of safety and stability that families need, this page has some resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Participate in one or both activities to go deeper.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- You can learn more about ACES and figure out your ACES and your Resilience scores here.
- Here is a website developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides coping strategies someone may use when they are experiencing stress.
- To understand more about psychological and verbal abuse, watch this three-and-a-half-minute TEDx Talks video.
- The Pennsylvania Carey Law School presents a 19-minute video about the intersectional challenges that immigrant women face while trying to become independent, and the ways that domestic violence impacts their progress.
- The PBS 26-minute video Battling Elder Abuse will help you learn more about how to recognize and combat elder abuse.

Reflective Questions

1. What do you think is the most important lesson for parents and other caregivers to know about ACEs and protective childhood experiences? How do you think that knowledge of these two concepts could positively impact the behavior of individuals, the work of community organizations, or the development of public policy?
2. How do healthy interpersonal relationships impact our lives? What role do your loved ones play in creating a sense of stability and safety in your life?
3. Why do some families have more access to the resources they need to be safe? What kinds of changes do you think should be made to increase access to safety and stability for all families?
4. How can we better address sexual violence and rape culture as a society?
5. Can you think of any social supports (government assistance, community resources, relationships) that did or would have positively impacted the life of your family as you grew up? Are there any current social supports that you're not currently receiving that could make a difference in your life? Why?
6. Out of all of the factors that can help promote and create safety and stability within families, which of the factors do you think is most important? Why?

Key Terms

- **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs):** traumas that occur in an individual's life before they turn 18, which include neglect, abuse, and household difficulties.
- **Child abuse:** the intentional emotional, negligent, physical, or sexual mistreatment of a child by an adult.
- **Elder abuse:** when older people are deprived of care or intentionally harmed by their caretakers.
- **Emotional abuse:** nonphysical maltreatment through verbal language.

- **Epigenetics:** the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work.
- **Intergenerational trauma:** a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are similar to those of the person who experienced the event.
- **Intimate partner violence (IPV):** any incident or pattern of behaviors (physical, psychological, sexual, or verbal) used by one partner to maintain power and control over the relationship.
- **Neglect:** failure to meet a child's basic needs.
- **Physical abuse:** any act, completed or attempted, that physically hurts or injures someone.
- **Protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs):** experiences that help children develop and promote resilience, even if they also have some adverse or traumatic childhood experiences.
- **Rape culture:** a society or environment where there is a culture of disbelief and lack of support for sexual violence survivors through normalizing and trivializing sexual violence despite its prevalent occurrence.
- **Restorative justice:** an intentional way of handling an offense involving three stakeholders within an organization or community: the person(s) who has offended, the person(s) who were harmed, and communities of care and reconciliation.
- **Restorative practices:** a social science that studies how to build, strengthen, and repair relationships among individuals, as well as connections within communities.
- **Sexual abuse:** maltreatment, violation, and exploitation where a perpetrator forces, coerces, or threatens someone into sexual contact for sexual gratification and/or financial benefit.
- **Sexual violence:** making degrading comments, touching in unpleasant means of harm, or addressing a partner in a degrading way during sexual intercourse, which includes marital rape.

Activity: Childhood Trauma over the Lifetime

It's important to understand the long-term effects of trauma as well as the ways that communities can address safety and trauma. If you'd like to learn about these topics, participate in this activity.

Watch this video featuring the former Surgeon General of California and pediatrician Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, who explains how ACEs can impact health in the long term but also ways that communities can address these issues before they get to that level (figure 9.9).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 9.9. How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime [YouTube Video]. Childhood trauma is a common occurrence that impacts individuals' physical and psychological health throughout their lifespan if it is not addressed. Transcript. "How Childhood Trauma Affects Health across a Lifetime" by TED. License: Standard YouTube License.

Discussion Questions

1. How do ACEs impact children's health outcomes?
2. What is the benefit of screening children for ACEs?
3. What can local and state public health agencies do to reduce the health impact that ACEs have on children?

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CHAPTER 10: FOOD AND WATER

Learning Objectives

1. Identify equity issues related to families' access to food.
2. Describe the ways that the poverty line and food costs are related.
3. Explain the ways in which family and social structures impact children's nutrition and food choices.
4. Describe the ways that social structures impact families' access to water and sanitation.
5. Describe the connection between the production of food and equity.
6. Apply theoretical concepts to one's own observations and experiences with food and water.

10.1: Chapter Reading Guide
10.2: Food Equity and Families
10.3: The Poverty Line and Food Costs
10.4: Food Habits Begin in Childhood
10.5: Access to Water and Sanitation
10.6: Addressing Equity in Food Production
10.7: Looking Ahead- Vertical Gardens
10.8: Going Deeper

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10.1: Chapter Reading Guide

Here, you will read about the ways families access food and water, as well as the social structures that support or get in the way of access and quality. For example, you may be surprised to learn about the ways the food banks benefit corporations in a way that does not directly improve nutrition for families. You'll also read about how children form food habits and what social programs specifically benefit them. Keep your sociological imagination active, especially as you think about access to drinking water and sanitation in public places.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. Preview those to have an idea of where you are headed. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Environmental justice:** an intersectional social movement pioneered by African American, Indigenous, Latinx, female, lower-income, and other people from historically oppressed populations fighting against environmental discrimination within their communities and across the world.
- **Food desert:** geographic locations where there is very limited or no access to affordable and nutritious foods.
- **Food insecurity:** low or very low access to food of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet (may or may not show patterns of disrupted eating).
- **Food security:** no or little reported indications of food access problems or limitations.
- **Food stamps:** the previous name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people.
- **Food system:** The interconnected systems and processes that influence nutrition, food, health, community development, and agriculture.
- **Poverty line:** the estimated minimum level of income needed to secure the necessities of life, adjusted annually for inflation.
- **Sanitation:** conditions relating to public health, especially the provision of clean drinking water and adequate sewage disposal.
- **Sharecropper:** a type of farming in which families rent small plots of land from a landowner in return for a portion of their crop, to be given to the landowner at the end of each year.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people.
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA):** the government department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food in the United States.
- **Wastewater:** water that has been used for a domestic or industrial purpose that must be cleaned before it is used again.

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10.2: Food Equity and Families

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Amy Huskey

> I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.
> —Martin Luther King Jr.



Figure 10.1. Some of the healthiest foods are the most difficult for families to access.

Survivalists have a rule of three: you can survive without food for three weeks, without water for three days, without shelter from a harsh environment for three hours, and without air for three minutes (The Survival University, n.d.). If a human goes without any of these resources for a long enough time, death will eventually be the result. It stands to reason that when we talk about American families' needs, we will talk about all of these. In this chapter, we will look at both food and water.

Obtaining food, water, shelter, sleep, and oxygen to survive consumes a large amount of our time and resources, both directly and indirectly. Think about how much time your family spends working to pay for food. In general, families pay a smaller percentage of their income for food than they did 50 years ago. That's not because food expenses have decreased but because other costs, primarily shelter and health care, have increased. Now consider your family's access to water. While we may not think about paying for it as a percentage of our incomes, access to plentiful, clean, safe water is influenced by where we live. The financial resources that are invested into our community infrastructure, which includes **sanitation**, access to clean water, and adequate sewage disposal, impact our safety and overall health. Where we live matters when it comes to having available and safe water.

Personal finances are only one part of the cost, benefits, and societal dynamics that play into meeting these basic needs. We must pay attention to where food comes from, business and government investment in food production, and the business of food charity. Time is another cost of food; families decide how much time is spent purchasing, preparing, eating, and cleaning up meals (figure 10.1). Turning on a faucet to access clean, toxin-free drinking water requires building, maintaining, and monitoring water and sanitation systems, and this comes at a cost that not all municipalities can afford. While the federal government has invested in water infrastructure, there is not an ongoing commitment, so these needs must be balanced with competing needs such as schools, parks, police, and libraries. There are variations and influences on how food and water needs are met, but ultimately, they must be met in some way.

Equitable Access

What causes some families to be hungry, or the more technical term, food insecure? We acknowledge that food insecurity is a symptom of another social problem: poverty. First, let's look at some of the systems that affect food availability in the United

States.

Equitable access to food is hampered by governmental systems that focus on subsidizing specific farm crops. Federal government subsidies help farmers reduce their risk due to weather, commodities brokers, economic downturns, and changes in demand. There are only five crops that receive these major government subsidies: corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, and rice. Producers of fruit, vegetables, and meat only benefit from crop insurance and disaster relief (Amadeo, 2020). Farm subsidies have increased dramatically in the last four years, totaling $28 billion for a two-year period (2018 to 2020, not including the additional COVID-19 payments authorized in spring 2020) (Charles, 2019). This incentivizes the production of certain crops in the United States and provides stability for the families involved in producing those crops.

It is more complicated to measure the effects of these subsidies on consumers. We know that these subsidized food crops (corn, soybeans, wheat, and rice) are more easily stored and used in processed foods, which nutritionists advise should be eaten in the smallest amounts. Crops in their raw forms, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, meat, and dairy products, provide more health benefits but are not subsidized consistently by the government (figure 10.2). Here, we may deduce that governmental subsidies for less healthy crops contribute to food availability and cost, affecting food purchases. Lower-income families and those living in food deserts are most affected.



Figure 10.2. Fresh produce is more difficult to store and less likely to be available at food banks. “Kitchen Remodel: 1927 Mission Revival Bungalow” by jlt. License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Another challenge to food accessibility is the societal approach that focuses on governmental programs (such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]) and charity, which in itself has become a business. Grocery stores and other businesses are provided with tax benefits when they overproduce food and donate it to food banks. Andy Fisher, the author of *Big Hunger,* describes hearing from grocery store owners who acknowledge the overproduction of sheet cakes, birthday cakes, pastries, and other baked goods. Consumers do not wish to purchase the last cake on the shelf, and so stores overproduce these items. When they are no longer considered fresh, they are donated to food banks. This is one of the reasons that about 25% of the donations that food banks give away consist of food that is categorized as unhealthy (Hemmelgarn, 2013). Listen to Fisher describe the complexities of this cycle in this podcast, where he discusses charitable giving, hunger, and poverty.

Not only is the overproduction of food supported by tax deductions, but food banks themselves have also become multimillion dollar businesses. Food banks serve a charitable purpose that meets an immediate and important need. At the same time, if the real problem—poverty—were addressed, people could have the dignity of providing and choosing the food that is best for their own family.

Poverty affects Americans of every racial-ethnic group, including those descended from European immigrants, but continues to affect the previously mentioned groups (Native Americans, Black or African Americans, and people descended from Latin America and some Asian countries) in disproportionately larger numbers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The United States is an individualistic country, and people are sometimes blamed for being poor. This makes the problem of hunger more approachable than the problem of poverty. It is encouraging to note, however, that Americans increasingly understand that poverty stems not from personal shortcomings but from differentiation in circumstance and opportunity. Pew Center survey results released in

March 2020 note that almost two-thirds of American adults say that people who are rich have experienced more advantages than those who are poor; only one-third say that it is because rich people have worked harder. These viewpoints are unevenly related to political affiliation and age, with Democrats and younger people more likely to hold the majority view (Pew Research Center, 2020). If more people view poverty as a social problem than a personal problem, it is more likely to be solved with a systemic solution.

Food Deserts

Food deserts are geographic locations where there is not a variety of healthy food readily available (within a mile in urban environments or within 10 to 20 miles in a rural area). Food deserts occur nationally, with a greater concentration of food deserts in the Midwest and southern states.

Think about the community that you live in. Where are the grocery stores? Convenience stores don't count because they do not typically have fresh fruits and vegetables (figure 10.3), although they do sell other items that are food stamp eligible. Are the stores evenly spaced out amongst the neighborhoods? Probably not, and typically the scarcity of stores is in lower-income neighborhoods. The same parts of Portland, Oregon that are identified as redlined neighborhoods in Chapter 8 are also food deserts. The Oregon State University student newspaper, *The Daily Barometer*, wrote about food deserts in Corvallis, Oregon, in 2019, pointing out that the majority of grocery stores in Corvallis are clustered around 9th Street and Walnut Boulevard (Shelby, 2019). Two of the four stores that are more distantly spaced are among the healthiest, emphasizing organic produce and natural foods, but are also the most expensive.



Figure 10.3. Convenience stores such as this one don't count as grocery stores because they do not sell the fresh, healthy foods that nutritionists recommend. "Food Desert Challenge: Day 1" by Mark Bonica. License: CC BY 2.0.

What if there were federal funding to support equitable distribution of grocery stores that had a full selection of healthy foods? In the same way that federal subsidies protect farmers of selected crops from economic problems, they could protect grocery businesses and create greater equity for many consumers.

Are you interested in learning whether you live in a food desert? If so, complete this activity: Do You Live in a Food Desert? In the "Going Deeper" section.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
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10.3: The Poverty Line and Food Costs

How is poverty defined? While there are multiple measures, a common and shared one is the poverty threshold, also known as the **poverty line**. While poverty will affect all of the families related to all of the topics in this text, we will discuss it here because it was originally tied to the cost of food, specifically an "economy food plan." In 1963, the poverty line was designated at three times the economy food plan, and it was assumed "that the housewife will be a careful shopper, a skillful cook, and a good manager who will prepare all the family's meals at home" (Fremstad, 2019).

When U.S. officials became concerned about poverty during the 1960s, they quickly realized they needed to find out how much poverty we had. To do so, a measure of official poverty, or a poverty line, was needed. A government economist, Mollie Orshanky, first calculated this line in 1963 by multiplying the cost of a very minimal diet by three, as a 1955 government study had determined that the typical American family spent one-third of its income on food. Thus a family whose cash income is lower than three times the cost of a very minimal diet is considered officially poor.

This way of calculating the official poverty line has not changed since 1963, although the amount is adjusted by inflation. It is thus out of date for many reasons. For example, many expenses, such as heat and electricity, childcare, transportation, and health care, now occupy a greater percentage of the typical family's budget than was true in 1963. In addition, this official measure ignores a family's non-cash income from benefits such as food stamps and tax credits. As a national measure, the poverty line also fails to take into account regional differences in the cost of living. All these problems make the official measurement of poverty highly suspect. As one poverty expert observes, "The official measure no longer corresponds to reality. It doesn't get either side of the equation right—how much the poor have or how much they need. No one really trusts the data" (DeParle et al., 2011).

This is a good time to ask yourself, if you looked at food as a percentage of your budget, would it be the equivalent of 33%? That's how the poverty line is still calculated.

The poverty line is adjusted annually for inflation and takes into account the number of people in a family: the larger the family size, the higher the poverty line. In 2010, the poverty line for a nonfarm family of four (two adults, two children) was $22,213. A four-person family earning even one more dollar than $22,213 in 2010 was not officially poor, even though its "extra" income hardly lifted it out of dire economic straits. Poverty experts have calculated a no-frills budget that enables a family to meet its basic needs in food, clothing, shelter, and so forth; this budget is about twice the poverty line. Families with incomes between the poverty line and twice the poverty line (or twice poverty) are barely making ends meet, but they are not considered officially poor (figure 10.4).



Figure 10.4. Ironically enough, although poverty is measured by an income that is lower than three times the cost of a minimal diet, many families above the poverty line still struggle to get enough food. "Funding Helps People Facing Food Insecurity" by Province of British Columbia. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

When we talk here about the poverty level, then, keep in mind that we are talking only about official poverty and that there are many families and individuals living in near poverty who have trouble meeting their basic needs, especially when they face unusually high medical expenses, motor vehicle expenses, college debt, or the like. For this reason, many analysts think families need incomes twice as high as the federal poverty level just to get by (Wright et al., 2011). They thus use twice-poverty data (i.e., family incomes below twice the poverty line) to provide a more accurate understanding of how many Americans face serious financial difficulties, even if they are not living in official poverty.

Food Security and Food Insecurity

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food in the United States, identified food insecurity as a measurable problem in 1995. The USDA introduced new language to describe ranges of severity of food insecurity in 2006. The methods used to assess households' food security remained unchanged. Here are the current definitions of food security and food insecurity (Economic Research Service, 2019):

Food Security

- High food security: no reported indications of food access problems or limitations.
- Marginal food security: one or two reported indications, typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.

Food Insecurity

- Low food security (food insecurity without hunger): reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet; little or no indication of reduced food intake.
- Very low food security (food insecurity with hunger): reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

According to the USDA, hunger "refer(s) to a potential consequence of food insecurity that, because of prolonged, involuntary lack of food, results in discomfort, illness, weakness, or pain that goes beyond the usual uneasy sensation." Nationally, food insecurity has been a problem as long as it has been measured, and the rate has changed very little; the number of food-insecure families was 12% in 1995 and was still 11.1% in 2018. Let's look more closely at Oregon, where food insecurity has been one of the toughest challenges to overcome, as shown in figure 10.5. According to the Oregon Public Health Division, Oregon ranks 13th in the nation for food insecurity among children and 21st for adults. While efforts have been made to combat hunger in Oregon, it is still a big problem for the state. According to USDA data, more than one in seven of Oregon households were food insecure between 2014 and 2016 (Bauer, 2018). If you'd like to see a visual of these data, click here. Renters in Oregon had food insecurity rates as high as one in four between 2015 and 2017 (Edwards, 2018).

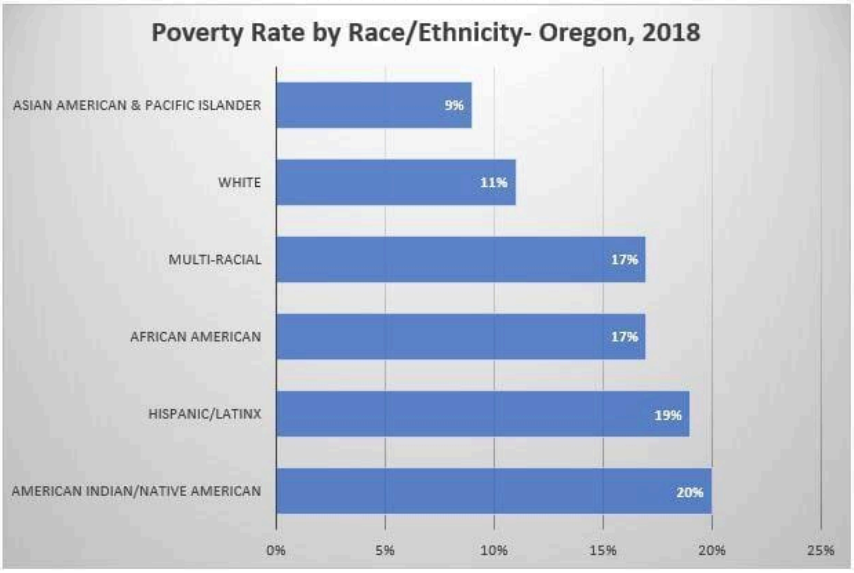


Figure 10.5. This graph shows the 2018 poverty rate in Oregon by race/ethnicity. "Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity, Oregon, 2018." Based on data from the American Community Survey/Kaiser Family Foundation. License: CC BY 4.0.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy says that over 527,000 people in Oregon suffer from food insecurity (Bauer, 2018).



Figure 10.6. 30% of food-insecure Oregonians in 2016 had too much income to qualify for SNAP assistance. "Share of Food Insecure Oregonians with Too Much Income to Qualify for SNAP Assistance, 2016." Based on data from the Oregon Center for Public Policy. License: CC BY 4.0.

To put that into perspective, the population of Portland, our largest city, is around 647,800 people. Overall, minorities and single mothers are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity; food insecurity is strongly linked to socioeconomic status.

While there are programs to help food-insecure families, there are still families who do not qualify for any food assistance (figure 10.6).

In Focus: Food Insecurity at Linn-Benton Community College

In a survey conducted by the Hope Center at Temple University, Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) in Albany, Oregon, was one of 400 community colleges queried about food and housing insecurity over the past five years. LBCC students participated in 2019, the fifth year of the study. The survey was sent to 5,700 students, and 558 students responded.

Forty-eight percent of students reported experiencing food insecurity within the last 30 days, slightly higher than the nationwide average of community college students (figure 10.7).

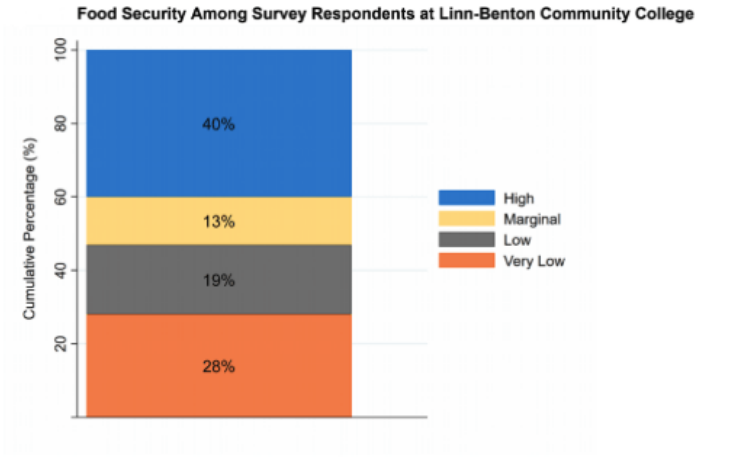


Figure 10.7. Forty-seven percent of student respondents at LBCC are food insecure. “Food Security among Survey Respondents at Linn-Benton Community College” in #2019 RealCollege Survey: Linn-Benton Community College by The Hope Center. Used with permission.

Sixty-six percent of the students who participated in the survey reported experiencing either food insecurity, housing insecurity, or houselessness within the past year (Baker-Smith et al., 2020). Various measures of food insecurity ranged in response from 5% to 49% of LBCC students (figure 10.8).



Figure 10.8. Food insecurity is faced in a variety of ways by survey respondents at LBCC. “Food insecurity among survey respondents at Linn-Benton Community College” in #2019 RealCollege Survey: Linn-Benton Community College by The Hope Center. Used with permission.

Food Stamps

Many people in the United States rely on SNAP to provide food for their families. **The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, also known as **food stamps**, is a federal program that, in some states, is supplemented with local funds whose goal is to supplement nutrition and the food budget of families who are moving toward self-sufficiency. According to the 2018 American Community Survey, 12.4% of people in the United States use food stamps, and the majority of those families have at least one person working, with ⅓ of recipients having two family members working (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Oregon has one of the highest usage rates in the country, at a rate of 14%. If you are interested in national data about SNAP, you can see a map of SNAP usage across the country.

Many people on SNAP still have trouble making ends meet. Many people find themselves stuck in a seemingly endless cycle of poverty despite striving for self-sufficiency. Read or listen here to a 3-minute summary of an interview with a woman in 2000 when she used food stamps and then in 2012 when she was interviewed again.

Fraud is often mentioned as a concern when it comes to food stamps, but when recipient and vendor fraud is totaled, it is estimated that less than 1% of all funds are disbursed. That means that more than 99% of the funds are used correctly (Constable, 2018). The USDA maintains a webpage that reports on its efforts to stop fraud and to recoup delinquent funds. These authors advocate for the focus to shift toward solving the social problems of poverty and hunger rather than letting the small amount of fraud distract the country from these efforts.

People struggling to feed themselves and their families face other challenges as well. Accepting governmental assistance and charity is stigmatized. Some families feel too embarrassed to seek or accept needed resources. Constant stress related to food insecurity and choosing which bills to pay contributes to mental health challenges. Do you or someone you know have experience with using SNAP? Click here to read Voices from "Hunger in Oregon" for short descriptions from Oregonians who have used this program.

Comprehension Self Check

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10.4: Food Habits Begin in Childhood

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Amy Huskey

Hearing the phrase “you are what you eat” might conjure a distinct image in a person’s mind. This phrase is often associated with encouraging a healthy diet to promote an individual’s overall well-being. Yet, food is not only a form of sustenance, but it is also used to communicate culture as well as a way of forming social ties and communicating love.

It is important to recognize the multidimensional influence food has on family life, and therefore how it can impact families in various ways. In particular, children are influenced by their primary caregivers’ habits, eating routines, and access to healthy food options.

Children and Nutrition

Children deserve a special mention when it comes to food, and especially to hunger, as they are heavily impacted by poverty and hunger in the United States. In 2017, 17.5% of all children in the United States lived in poverty; Latino/a/x and Black children were more often in poverty than were White children. This contributes to diet deficiency. A high-quality diet is a major contributing factor to children’s health and well-being and to their health outcomes as adults. Poor eating patterns in childhood are associated with obesity during childhood and adolescence; obese children are more likely to become obese adults. Obesity in children has been increasing dramatically since 1980 and is likely related to diet, physical activity, family environment, and other factors. Obesity leads to increased risks for a wide variety of chronic diseases, including diabetes, stroke, heart disease, arthritis, and some cancers (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2019).

Hunger and a poor diet can have other effects on children. Hungry children cannot learn as efficiently as well-nourished children. According to the American Psychological Association, they are more likely to develop anxiety and depression along with other health problems. Brain development, learning, and information processing can all be affected by lacking an adequate diet. Children experience stigma around being food insecure and accessing free and reduced meals, part of the federal response to poverty. If you want to know more about this federally regulated and funded program, access the USDA website here. Many children receive USDA-subsidized meals and snacks in childcare and at school (figure 10.9). Children may feel isolated and ashamed about being poor or about being food insecure, although many children share this experience in the United States (American Psychological Association, n.d.).



Figure 10.9. Children eat fresh fruit in a childcare setting. “NCES Receives Fresh Fruits and Veggies Grant” by North Charleston. License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

Early Food Experiences

The way our family approaches food when we are children affects us for the rest of our lives. What we eat matters, as do the social aspects of meals. Some families eat meals together; others eat their meals individually in front of devices. People who were not exposed to a variety of foods as children or who were forced to swallow every last bite of overcooked vegetables may make limited food choices as adults. Children who do not practice socializing during meals may not develop social skills or understand social norms at the dining table. A variety of factors—social, cultural, personal health, environmental, and experiential—affect how we eat, what we eat, and where we eat.

Social Factors

Any school lunchroom observer can testify to the impact of peer pressure on eating habits, and this influence lasts through adulthood. People make food choices based on how they see others and want others to see them. For example, individuals who are surrounded by others who consume fast food are more likely to do the same.

Advertising and media greatly influence food choice by persuading consumers to eat certain foods. Have you ever found yourself suddenly hungry after watching an advertisement for a local pizza place? The media affects both when we eat and what we eat.

Cultural Factors

The culture in which one grows up affects how one sees food in daily life and on special occasions. Food and family recipes are important ways to transmit culture across families and from generation to generation. Traditions and celebrations often include food.

People design their diets for various reasons, including religious doctrines. For example, Jewish people may observe kosher eating practices, and Muslim people fast during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar.

Personal Health Factors

It can be easy to establish a habit around things we do each day. For example, having a dessert can become a habit. Having a snack after school or a drink with dinner can develop into a habit. Healthy habits such as “an apple a day” can be developed as well and may require intention on the part of the individual.

Some people have significant food allergies to peanuts, for example, and need to avoid those foods. Others may have developed health issues that require them to follow a low-salt or gluten-free diet. In addition, people who have never worried about their weight have a very different approach to eating than those who have long struggled with excess weight.

In addition to one’s physical health, emotional issues can also affect eating habits. When faced with a great deal of stress, some people tend to overeat, while others find it hard to eat at all.

Environmental Factors

Where a person lives influences food choices. For instance, people who live in Midwestern U.S. states have less access to fresh seafood than those living along the coasts.

Based on a growing understanding of diet as a public and personal issue, more and more people are starting to make food choices based on their environmental impact. Realizing that their food choices help shape the world, many individuals are opting for a vegetarian diet or, if they do eat animal products, striving to find the most “cruelty-free” or sustainable options possible. Purchasing local and organic food products and items grown through sustainable means also helps shrink the size of one’s dietary footprint.

Experiential Factors

Knowledge about healthful foods and calorie amounts affects food choices. This can be gained through family, peer, or media

influence. Cooking knowledge is impactful. For example, knowing how to hydrate dried beans or prepare fresh vegetables could increase the consumption of healthier foods. There has been a dramatic increase in television cooking shows in the 21st century, as well as nutrition, recipe, and cooking websites, blogs, and videos. The amount of information can make it hard to choose, but there are many options to learn about nutrition and cooking.

In Focus: Intergenerational Eating Influences



Figure 10.10. These cookbooks represent the owner's evolution in cooking and eating, as influenced by first her mother, then her partner, and now her adult daughters. Photograph by Elizabeth B. Pearce. License: CC BY 4.0.

Cooking food and sharing meals have been important to me all my life. My love of sharing food has not changed, but the people I share my everyday life with have. My mom was the cook in my family of origin; a typical dinner meal included meat, potatoes, and two vegetables. I remember *The Joy of Cooking* (figure 10.10, left) as her "go-to" cookbook.

I've used The Moosewood Cookbook (vegetarian) and The Silver Palate (omnivorous) for over 30 years at home. Now I share food with my partner and with my adult daughters who choose vegan to mostly vegetarian eating. We still love cooking and eating together, but there is a lot more dialogue, debate, and compromise. Now, I use a vegan cookbook to prepare some meals when my daughters come home for the weekend.

One thing that contemporary families in the United States have less now than they did 50 years ago is time. This is primarily due to the decreasing number of jobs with enough pay and benefits to support a family and the need for more adults in the house to be working. With less time, efficiencies such as fast food, processed food, and prepared food become more appealing. Having more time means that families have the flexibility to cook and prepare their own food if they choose.

Comprehension Self Check

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10.5: Access to Water and Sanitation

Alexis Castaneda-Perez and Elizabeth B. Pearce

For about 100 years, water in the United States has been supported by a federally funded infrastructure that ensures families safe drinking water and sanitation. Water-borne diseases, such as cholera, were virtually eliminated by the provision of this system. Although the effort to create safe water and sanitation was well funded up until the end of the 20th century, there are some geographic areas and groups that are underserved; systems were not funded equitably before funding dried up.

Safe water and **sanitation** can be defined by these three things:

- Access to safe and reliable drinking water
- A shower, toilet, and tap in the home
- A reliable system for treating and disposing of **wastewater** that has been used for a domestic or industrial purpose

Socioeconomic status is a barrier to safe water access. Challenges in poor communities include contaminated water supplies, housing with lead pipes, other substandard plumbing issues, and unequal distribution of public drinking water, such as water fountains in schools and other public places.

As individuals more regularly carry their water with them, access to a bottle filling station can mean the difference between a one-time purchase or the ongoing expense of hundreds of plastic water bottles (figure 10.11). Look around your own daily environments; where can you find these stations? Could there be more bottle fillers added and more equitably distributed?



Figure 10.11. Water bottle filling stations cut down on costs related to disposable bottles. “Water Bottle Fountain, Brokeoff Mountain 2015” by ray_explores. License: CC BY 2.0.

Diverse Water Challenges

Almost one-third of adults in America are inadequately hydrated. Race is the biggest predictor of lack of water access; African American and Latinx people are more likely to experience a lack of adequate hydration as are lower-income people (Brooks et al., 2017). This graphic from the University of North Carolina describes six access challenges (figure 10.12).



Figure 10.12. It is eye-opening to realize the number of water access challenges families face in the United States. "An Overview of Clean Water Access Challenges in the United States" © University of North Carolina Environmental Finance Center. License: Fair Use.

There is no centralized government or research entity that collects national data about water and sanitation in the United States, which creates challenges to assessing and meeting needs. In November 2019, the U.S. Water Alliance and Dig Deep, two organizations dedicated to improving water access for families in the United States, released a comprehensive report analyzing all available data from local, regional, and national sources. More than 2 million Americans lack access to safe water. Closing the Water Access Gap in the United States: A National Action Plan has five key findings:

1. Federal data don't accurately measure the water access gap.
2. Race is the strongest predictor of water and sanitation access.
3. Poverty is a key obstacle to water access.
4. Water access challenges affect entire communities.
5. Progress is uneven, and some communities are backsliding.

Along with race and poverty as indicators, the report identifies residents of Puerto Rico, houseless people, and members of Native American communities as having a greater likelihood of lack of access to water and sanitation (U.S. Water Alliance, 2019). If you are interested in accessing the full report, Closing the Water Access Gap in the United States: A National Action Plan, it is available here.

In Focus: Effects of Flint's Water Crisis on Families

Let's look more closely at a community that has experienced a safe water crisis between 2014 and 2020. For some context, Flint, Michigan, was a booming city with many well-paying jobs for families and an economy centered around the automotive industry through the late 20th century (figure 10.13).



Figure 10.13. General Motors was a highly profitable automaker in the late 20th century. "1968 General Motors Buick Electra Pontiac Catalina Caprice Olds 98 Fleetwood Advertisement Readers Digest November 1967" by SenseiAlan. License: CC BY 2.0.

Once a booming economic center of the automotive industry, Flint, Michigan, suffered multiple economic setbacks in the latter part of the 20th century that changed the city's makeup. Those who could afford to move relocated in search of better opportunities, and those who could not were more or less forced to stay. Flint's population shrunk by half during this time (State of Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, 2016). According to the U.S. census population estimates, 53.7% of Flint residents are African American, and 40.4% of its population lives in poverty (Figure 10.14; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The median household income in Flint is about $24,000 to $27,000 a year.

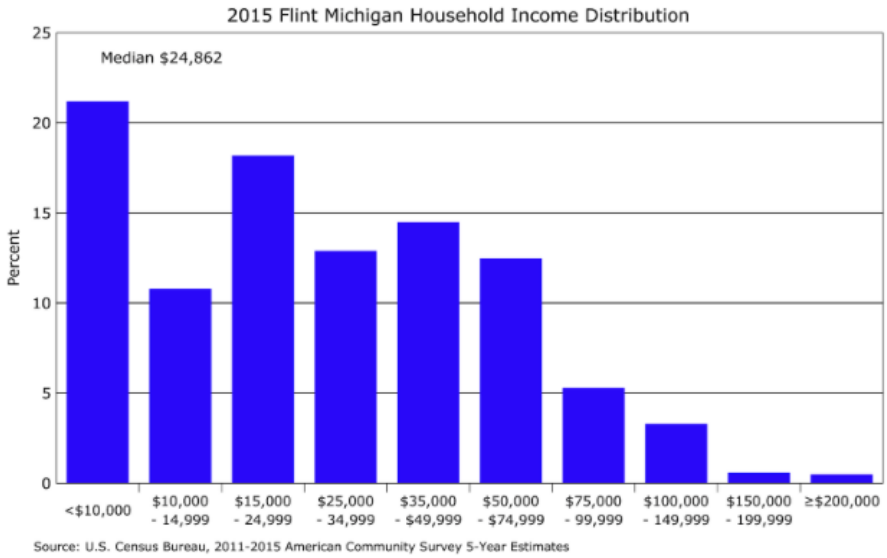


Figure 10.14. Flint, Michigan, has many low-income families. "Distribution of Household Income in Flint, Michigan in 2015" by Delphi234. Data from U.S. Census in 2015 inflation-adjusted dollars. License: CCO 1.0.

Saving Money

In 2014, Flint city officials decided to change its water source. The city used to get its water from the Detroit Water and Sewage Department. This water was treated and sourced from Lake Huron and the Detroit River. While this worked fine, the city was strapped for cash, and in 2011, Flint had a $25 million deficit (City of Flint, 2012). The city declared a state of emergency and was looking for ways to save money. City leaders decided to source water from the Flint River as a cheap and temporary alternative while a pipeline from the Huron River was built. However, the water was not treated properly for human consumption, which

caused spikes of lead in the water. Immediately after the water source was switched, people noticed that the tap water in Flint was different. The color ranged from yellow to brown, smelled weird, and tasted terrible.

Effects on Families

In one home, Virginia Tech researchers found that the lead levels in the water were between 200 parts per billion (ppb) and 13,200 ppb (Mantha & Roy, 2015). Lead amounts above 5,000 ppb are classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be hazardous waste. Children are the most susceptible to the effects of lead. It can lead to many health issues, such as anemia, slowed growth, and learning problems. Lead can put pregnant women at risk for miscarriage, as well as cause organ issues in adults. High levels of lead can cause death (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2019). An outbreak of Legionnaires' disease, a serious type of pneumonia (lung infection) caused by bacteria, is also thought to be caused by the water crisis (AlHajal, 2016). At least 12 people have died as a result, and numerous criminal and civil lawsuits have been filed against officials.

After 18 months of negotiations, the State of Michigan agreed to a $626 million settlement. More than 80% of that money would go to people who were minors and most affected by the toxins in the water.

Environmental Justice

According to the EPA, **environmental justice** is "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2020). People of color and low-income families are disproportionately being affected by the water crisis in Flint, a classic case of environmental injustice. These families can't easily move or fund a new source of water.

The EPA also emphasizes "the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards" along with its definition of environmental justice. It is clear that the people of Flint are not receiving the same degree of protection. Watch this 3-minute video in figure 10.15 to further understand the definition and history of environmental justice.

YouTube Video

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Figure 10.15. A Brief History of Environmental Justice [YouTube Video]. Environmental justice has been actively sought since at least the 1970s. Transcript. "A Brief History of Environmental Justice" by ProPublica. License Terms: CC BY 4.0.

Deindustrialization in Rural America

The decline of deindustrialization can be felt in rural communities as well. For example, Oregon's timber industry faced a massive decline after the 1980s recession (Mapes, 2019). Environmental regulations have affected job availability. We can see many parallels between this situation and other communities that have faced job and company losses. Many towns that were dependent on the income from the timber industry are now left struggling.

Douglas County recently voted to shut down its entire library system (figure 10.16; Friedman, 2019). Jackson County and Josephine County have also had to shut down their libraries, although eventually, they managed to bring back partial services (Swinder, 2017). Many timber towns depended on a federal program that gave $100 million every year to Oregon counties. Since the program has been discontinued, many counties are having to make sacrifices to keep from going under (Mapes, 2014). Another parallel we can see between the deindustrialization of Michigan and Oregon is that people left small towns for urban centers, with those remaining mostly being of low income.



Figure 10.16. When cities and counties are underfunded, they must choose between programs that serve all families, such as water, parks, schools, and libraries. “Library” by Albuquerque South Broadway Cultural Center. License: CC BY 2.0.

Lawmakers in these communities face similar choices as the leaders in Flint, Michigan. When there are fewer taxpayers to fund local services and less federal funding for services that all families can use, programs such as libraries, schools, parks, and even water must be examined as places to save money. As in Flint, the lack of services disproportionately hurts people with low income who are unable to or reluctant to move to other communities.

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10.6: Addressing Equity in Food Production

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Carla Medel

Food Production and Systems of Oppression

Prior to the formation of the United States, families found food in a variety of ways, including foraging, hunting, fishing, and growing food. As the country progressed toward a formal organizational structure managed by the Euro-American settlers, Native Americans were restricted to designated reservations, often on land that was not as fertile for farming. Food production via farms became a major economic factor. Industrialization created more efficiencies and more wealth for landowners.

It is important to note that these new ways of sourcing food would not have been possible without three institutional structures:

1. Oppression of the way of life that Native Americans had established here for thousands of years
2. Enslavement of African immigrants brought to this country for the explicit purpose of free labor without attention to their rights and needs
3. Laws that controlled immigrants from other countries by limiting who could immigrate by gender, familial, and employment status and laws that discriminate based on nationality and immigration status related to wage, housing options, and type of employment

These structures affected the functionality of all families in the United States, favoring White families, especially those who owned land. Which of these structures affect families today? If you answered all three, you are correct. Native Americans are still fighting for rights related to their family needs that have been disrupted and restricted; the aftereffects of slavery, including the restrictions of wealth attainment on Black people, affect both the families who were able to accumulate wealth and the ones who were not; and current immigration laws still place the needs of the employers first.

Black Farmers During Reconstruction

Black farmers in America have had a long and arduous struggle to own land and to operate independently. For more than a century after the Civil War, deficient civil rights and various economic and social barriers maintained a system of inequality. Many Black farmers worked as farm operators with a limited and often total lack of opportunity to achieve ownership and independence. Although some formerly enslaved people were deeded land in the “Forty Acres and a Mule” division of lands in 1868, the same land was later deeded back to the original Confederate owners. Instead, the Black families became **sharecroppers** rather than owners, meaning that they worked the land for the White owner and were paid with a portion of the crop (McCammon, 2015). Other Black farm owners saw their properties diminished throughout the 20th century, as described in the 15-minute video in figure 10.17.

YouTube Video

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Figure 10.17. How Black Americans Were Robbed of Their Land [YouTube Video]. These personal stories help us understand how families that worked hard were still treated unjustly. Transcript. “How Black Americans Were Robbed of Their Land” © The Atlantic. License: Standard YouTube License.

Black farmers often ended up working for landowners once again. Even as employees, they received less protection than factory and office workers. When social security and unemployment laws meant to protect workers were passed, they excluded people who worked on farms or as domestic help, of which the majority were immigrants and marginalized groups, including African

Americans. Diminished civil rights also limited collective action strategies, such as cooperatives and unions.

It is tempting to think that these past laws and practices do not affect us today. Many of the structures survive, however, in both subtle and obvious ways. In addition, because these structures limited access and land ownership in proximity to the vital resources of food and water, White families were able to build wealth more quickly and easily than any other group of families. We discuss the institutional factors related to housing, location, and wealth in Chapter 8.

Farm and Field Workers

Farm workers are and have been an essential part of the U.S. economy and food system. They come in varying immigration statuses: U.S. citizens or residents, people on guest worker visas, or undocumented workers. Here are some of the demographic characteristics of farm workers in the United States in 2018, collected from data on the American Community Survey. The data show the following about farm laborers, graders, and sorters (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019):

- About 55% are born in countries other than the United States
- About half have not completed high school
- 53% are U.S. citizens
- About half are married
- 26% identify as female

Because these data are gathered from a written survey related to the U.S. census, it is important to note that there is likely some underreporting from groups that are the hardest to reach, including people of color, children under five, renters, immigrants, people with limited English proficiency, multiple-family homes, Indigenous tribal and urban communities, disabled people, people who distrust the government, and LGBTQIA+ individuals. The challenges of representation and the significance of the Census are discussed at length in Chapter 6.

The survey also tells us that the average age for farmworkers is on the rise, and they are more likely to be female. Younger immigrants are less likely to go into farm work than into other professions, so the population is aging. It is hypothesized that as men move toward agricultural employment (rather than working with crops) and there is increased machine usage, women are moving into these jobs.

Immigrants, especially those who are not yet documented or who live in mixed-status families, are more likely to experience poor treatment and be less likely to complain about bad work conditions.

In Focus: The Real Cost of Food

103 degrees Fahrenheit, picking zucchini, I turn to the sound of “water, water, we need water!” and to the woman with the purple bandana and a hurt shoulder on the ground; she had fainted from dehydration. She sits underneath a tree for 15 minutes with a bottle of water that one of our coworkers was able to give her and before I even know it, she is back on the field picking zucchini along my side.

That afternoon, as I made my way home, I could not help but begin crying out of frustration. I was only 16, but I knew that what I had just witnessed was not correct. Feeling hopeless the next day, I no longer wanted to go back to work. What I did instead was go grocery shopping with my mom. When we headed to produce, and I saw people grabbing zucchini, the tears came again. They did not know what those $0.76 zucchini really cost. This is my story, but this is definitely not a unique one. Immigrant farm workers in the United States are treated terribly, and with little to no protection, others are ready to take advantage.

Food Factory Workers as Essential Workers

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought necessary attention to the important function of meat production and the preservation of fruits and vegetables in factories. The federal government has determined employees at food factories to be essential workers. Many of these workers are immigrants and people of color.

The authors of this text plan to elaborate on this group of families in future editions of the text. For now, the article How One City Mayor Forced A Pork Giant To Close Its Virus-Stricken Plant illustrates the dilemmas that essential workers faced at the Smithfield pork plant in South Dakota.

In Focus: The “Gangsta Gardener”

How can individuals and families impact the trends toward large commercial farms and the likelihood that foods are transported thousands of miles away rather than being available fresh, locally? One example of someone who is making a difference is Ron Finley, a proponent of urban farming. Formerly best known as a fashion designer for high-end stores and celebrities, he now calls himself the “Gangsta Gardener” after digging up a strip of earth between his house and the street to plant fruits and vegetables. It turned out that this was illegal in the city of Los Angeles, so Finley worked to change the law (figure 10.18).



Figure 10.18. Ron Finley has inspired people locally and globally to use urban spaces to grow healthy food. The Gangsta Gardener, Ron Finley, August 17-20, 2018 by U.S. Embassy, New Zealand in the public domain.

Since that time, he has helped hundreds of families start their own gardens and given a TED Talk watched by 4.2 million people as of 2022. An article in *The Guardian* described Finley this way:

> He has traveled widely talking about his work, including a TED Talk watched by 3.5 million people (that’s where his nickname comes from, when he says: “Let’s all become gangsta gardeners….If you ain’t a gardener, you ain’t gangsta”). He likens his work to graffiti, describing Mother Nature as the greatest artist out there. “We did it in L.A. and we can do it all over the world….A garden can change people’s lives, it can change the destruction of a community,” he says in Can You Dig This?, a 2015 documentary about community gardens in South Central, which has music star John Legend among its executive producers (Weston, 2020).

Finley emphasizes the importance of opportunity as opposed to hope. “It’s the opportunity to make shit happen….A lot of the governments and municipalities need to put money into this, which they haven’t,” he says (Weston, 2020).

Sustainable Agriculture Movement

A growing movement has emerged during the past two decades to address agricultural practices that contribute to these problems. Advocates argue that sustainable agriculture can address many environmental and social concerns and can benefit growers, laborers, and consumers.

The **food system** is more than just the farm. It involves the interaction of individuals and institutions with contrasting and often competing goals. The system includes farmers, researchers, input suppliers, farmworkers, unions, farm advisors, processors, retailers, consumers, and policymakers. Relationships among these groups shift over time as new technologies create economic, social, and political changes.

New federal, state, and local government policies are needed to simultaneously promote environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity.

For example, currently, government subsidies support large corporations growing corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, and rice. This

makes it difficult for farmers to diversify. Policy changes could encourage a diverse and decentralized system of family farms rather than large corporations that plant single crops. Government and land-grant universities could create research policies that encouraged research into sustainable alternatives. Rules that require fruits and vegetables to look perfect could be amended to encourage reduced pesticide use. Subsidies could also increase consumer power, especially for low-income families. If fresh, green foods were of lower cost and more available, all families would have greater access to healthy diets.

The conversion of agricultural land for urban use is another important issue. Rapid growth and rising land values threaten farming on prime soils. At the same time, people in newly developed residential communities often want environmentally safe farming practices. Sustainable agriculture research and education can help farmers reduce chemical use and conserve scarce resources. These practices can help build public support for agricultural land preservation. Educating land use planners and decision-makers about sustainable agriculture is an urgent priority (University of California at Davis, 2022). This video in figure 10.19 provides an example of a dairy farm that is both sustainable and profitable.

YouTube Video

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Figure 10.19. Sustainable Farming – TechKnow [YouTube Video]. Consumers can play a role in creating a sustainable food system. Through their purchases, they send messages to producers, retailers, and others in the system about what they think is essential. Transcript. "Sustainable Farming" © TechKnow. License: Standard YouTube License.

Rural communities are often among the poorest locations in the nation. The reasons for the decline are complex, but changes in farm structure have played a significant role. Sustainable agriculture presents an opportunity to rethink the importance of family farms and rural communities. Economic development policies are needed that encourage more diversified agricultural production on family farms as a foundation for healthy economies in rural communities. In combination with other strategies, sustainable agriculture practices and policies can help foster community institutions that meet employment, educational, health, cultural, and spiritual needs.

Food cost and nutritional quality have always influenced consumer choices. The challenge now is to find strategies that broaden consumer perspectives so that environmental quality, resource use, and social equity issues are also considered in shopping decisions.

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10.7: Looking Ahead- Vertical Gardens

There are interesting developments in sustainable and socially equitable agriculture today such as the vertical and urban gardening movement. Vertical and urban gardens bring hope that fresh, green, and healthy foods can be made more available to families in cities via smaller local gardens. In figure 10.20, several vertical gardens are explored, including one that is feeding an entire group of children in their preschool in California.

YouTube Video

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Figure 10.20. Vertical Farming – TechKnow [YouTube Video]. If you would like to see some creative ways to farm, watch this six-minute video that describes solutions to finding usable farmland. Transcript. "Vertical Farming" © TechKnow. License: Standard YouTube License.

The U.S. Water Alliance provides the most comprehensive view of water access in the United States and is dedicated to valuing and managing this resource. Via listening sessions and collaborations with businesses, governments, nonprofit organizations, and individuals all over the country, they have developed a platform of seven big ideas to sustain water resources:

1. Advance regional collaboration on water management.
2. Accelerate agriculture-utility partnerships to improve water quality.
3. Sustain adequate funding for water infrastructure.
4. Blend public and private expertise and investment to address water infrastructure needs.
5. Redefine affordability for the 21st century.
6. Reduce lead risks, and embrace the mission of protecting public health.
7. Accelerate technology adoption to build efficiency and improve water service.

Ideas and organizations such as this one provide leadership so that all families in the United States will have access to safe water and sanitation.

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10.8: Going Deeper

Now that you have explored food access, food quality, food production, water safety, and sanitation, this page has some additional resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- To learn more about food deserts or to access an interactive map that displays different ways of viewing food deserts, read NPR's article "How to Find a Food Desert Near You" and follow the link to the USDA's Food Atlas.
- Click here to read Voices from "Hunger in Oregon" for short descriptions from Oregonians who have used SNAP.
- To read more about how to find lead in your home environment and the effects of lead on children, click here for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's infographic.
- To see additional perspectives and proposed solutions to these social problems, watch LaToya Ruby Frazier detail the experiences of the low-income residents as well as a creative solution. She was hired to document the unfolding crisis in Flint and relates her history growing up with environmental racism in Philadelphia to the crisis.

Reflective Questions

1. Reflect on accessing healthy food. What kinds of access do families have in your community? Consider locations of grocery stores (not including convenience stores) as well as public transportation systems.
2. What role do government crop subsidies play in nutrition?
3. What role do government tax breaks and food banks play in food insecurity?
4. What influences families' food purchases? How does what you've read relate to your own family's experience with food?
5. What are the factors that affect a family's access to safe water and sanitation?
6. What role does the government play in the water and sanitation system?
7. How would you improve water access and sanitation in your community if you had the chance?

Key Terms

- **Environmental justice:** an intersectional social movement pioneered by African American, Indigenous, Latinx, female, lower-income, and other people from historically oppressed populations fighting against environmental discrimination within their communities and across the world.
- **Food desert:** geographic locations where there is very limited or no access to affordable and nutritious foods.
- **Food insecurity:** low or very low access to food of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet (may or may not show patterns of disrupted eating).
- **Food security:** no or little reported indications of food access problems or limitations.
- **Food stamps:** the previous name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people.

- **Food system:** The interconnected systems and processes that influence nutrition, food, health, community development, and agriculture.
- **Poverty line:** the estimated minimum level of income needed to secure the necessities of life, adjusted annually for inflation.
- **Sanitation:** conditions relating to public health, especially the provision of clean drinking water and adequate sewage disposal.
- **Sharecropper:** a type of farming in which families rent small plots of land from a landowner in return for a portion of their crop, to be given to the landowner at the end of each year.
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people.
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA):** the government department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food in the United States.
- **Wastewater:** water that has been used for domestic or industrial purposes and must be cleaned before it is used again.

Activity: Do You Live in a Food Desert?

Read this short article, "How to Find a Food Desert Near You." It describes the federal government's food atlas and demonstrates how to use the atlas to learn about a specific neighborhood.

Access and explore the Food Access Research Atlas for your own community. You can double-click to zoom in on the map of the United States to view information on a specific geographic area or use the search bar at the top left of the map to search for your zip code, city, county, or state.

Using the selection box in the top right of the map, select the first box (Green) labeled "LI and LA at 1 and 10 miles." This label refers to a low-income census tract where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1 mile (in an urban area) or 10 miles (in a rural area) from the nearest supermarket. When it is selected, all of the green sections of the map indicate areas of the country in which people lack access to fresh, healthy food.

Discussion Questions

1. What areas of the country have the most food deserts? How might rural food deserts be different than urban food deserts?
2. Use the search bar in the Food Access Research Atlas to identify data for your zip code or city. Use the link "download this tract's 2019 dataset" to create a list of what you can learn about food access in your own community. Identify specific information.
3. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also publishes a Food Environment Atlas. How might access to unhealthy fast food food impact low-income people with low access to a grocery store?

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CHAPTER 11: JUSTICE

Learning Objectives

1. Define various forms of justice.
2. Explain what is meant by “the criminalization of poverty.”
3. Describe how the founding documents of our country define justice.
4. Describe how intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, and socioeconomic status create different experiences of justice for individuals and families.
5. Describe how several aspects of the justice system, such as policing, courts, and prisons, are related to race.
6. Explain how mental health and substance use disorders are related.
7. Identify two 21st-century federal immigration bills and explain how they would impact immigrant families.

11.1: Chapter Reading Guide

11.2: Justice- An Introduction

11.3: The Intersectionality of Justice

11.4: Treatment, Jail, or Justice?

11.5: Real Laws, Real Families

11.6: Looking Ahead- Immigrant Families

11.7: Going Deeper

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11.1: Chapter Reading Guide

In this chapter, you will read selected essays by three student authors, Alexis Castenada-Perez, Christopher Byers, and Carla Medel, as well as the "In Focus" section by a fourth student, Heather Denherder. The students themselves selected these topics within the framework of justice and families. While the balance of the book consists of either faculty writing or collaborative writing between students and myself, these essays are theirs. When it comes to justice, I want you to read directly the words of students and see what matters to them. Going forward, I will add to this chapter with additions by other students. Each of the individual students will speak to a meaningful aspect of justice, their experience writing the text, and their developing understanding of justice.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. Preview those to have an idea of where you are headed. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Criminalization:** the act of making an activity or person illegal by making their activity a criminal offense.
- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA):** a U.S. immigration policy that allows individuals who arrived in the United States as children to remain and work in the country for a renewable period of two years. This policy has been legalized and implemented inconsistently in the 2000s.
- **Implicit bias:** an unconscious tendency to favor one person, group, or point of view over another, usually based on social characteristics such as gender, sexuality, race, or socioeconomic status.
- **Incarceration:** being confined within a prison or jail.
- **Justice:** concerned with equity, equality, fairness, and sometimes punishment.
- **Militarization:** the process of preparing for war or another conflict; can refer to the transformation of a civilian agency becoming more like a military operation.
- **Social justice:** focuses on equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal treatment as well as meaningful actions to correct past discrimination.
- **Substance use disorder (SUD):** a disease that affects the brain and includes the uncontrolled use of something despite harmful consequences (sometimes called substance abuse).

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11.2: Justice- An Introduction

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Heather Denherder

> It's up to all of us—Black, White, everyone—no matter how well-meaning we think we might be, to do the honest, uncomfortable work of rooting it out. It starts with self-examination and listening to those whose lives are different from our own. It ends with justice, compassion, and empathy that manifests in our lives and on our streets.
> —Michelle Obama, J.D.

Your social identity affects your experience with justice, how you understand what justice is, and how you will respond to this chapter, and this textbook, which is written with an equity lens. It is easy to think we live in a country where every family has equitable access to opportunity, representation, and justice, but we must recognize the ways in which justice is distributed unevenly. **Justice** has many definitions, but it typically involves equal access or opportunity, equal treatment, and equal rights.

The intent of this chapter and this text is to uncover the ways in which representation and justice contribute to inequity in family experiences in the United States. When we talk about families, we are moving far beyond the social construction of "family" (as discussed in Chapter 1) and the ways that government and other institutions define "family" for taxes, health care, and other legal rights and responsibilities. We are including all the ways that people define their own families. It is our aspirational goal to inspire readers to understand injustice more deeply and to advocate and contribute to changes toward greater equity, or justice, for families in the United States.

What Is Justice?

Justice has been defined in many ways. Here, we will share a few of the kinds of justice that affect families and communities. As you read this section and the students' essays, see if you can identify these kinds of justice.

- Procedural justice refers to the process used in an organization. There are four principles, often referred to as the four pillars: 1) being fair in processes, 2) being transparent in actions, 3) providing an opportunity for voice, and 4) being impartial in decision-making (*Organizational change through decision-making and policy: A new procedural justice course for managers and supervisors*. (n.d.).
- Distributive justice refers to the ways that valued materials and services are distributed. But this, in itself, raises questions related to fairness, equality, and equity. Recall those definitions from Chapter 1? Should everyone get what they need? Or should everyone get exactly the same thing? Who gets to decide what the formula for distribution is?
- Retributive justice is focused on punishment or some kind of penalty for doing something wrong. It could include the idea that the punishment must match the wrongful behavior and that there is moral justification for returning suffering to the wrongdoer (Bedau, 1978).
- Restorative justice was discussed at length in Chapter 9 and refers to an intentional way of handling an offense and involves three stakeholders within an organization or community: the person(s) who has offended the person(s) who were harmed, and communities of care and reconciliation (Wachtel, 2016).

We have already described environmental justice in Chapter 10, specifically focused on the places where families eat, work, and live. There are disproportionate ways that poor families and families with people of color (POC) are more likely to be exposed to harmful environments that have lead and poor air quality, for example, and have less access to positive environmental aspects such as parks to play in and trees lining the streets and sidewalks. Although this text tends to use the word "equity" rather than social justice, these terms are closely related. **Social justice** can be thought of as equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal treatment for all, regardless of social identities. Like environmental justice, it also focuses on taking meaningful action to correct past discrimination.

The Social Construction of Justice and Criminality

The common law system of justice is generally used in the United States. Common law, or case law, is law that is derived primarily from the court system. When a case is tried and decided in a court, it can affect civil law, which are laws created by governing bodies such as state legislatures and the federal congress.

The level a particular court holds will affect whether counties, states, or the whole country will see a change in law based on the decision. Who makes those court decisions? While juries are involved in some cases, judges ultimately make many decisions before a case even appears before a jury. Judges also make decisions along the way about what evidence, witnesses, and motions will be allowed. Many cases are decided by a single judge or a panel of judges, without a jury. This is true for the United States Supreme Court, pictured in figure 11.1, the Regional Appeals Courts, and many lower-level courts. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States; decisions made by this court affect civil laws and all existing related case law in the country.

Who judges are, their experiences, their beliefs, and their backgrounds have a big impact on all citizens of the United States. Judges in the United States must meet requirements such as having a Juris Doctorate (law degree), passing the bar exam, and practicing law.



Figure 11.1. The Supreme Court as composed from June 30, 2022, and as of 2024. Front row, left to right: Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., and Associate Justice Elena Kagan. Back row, left to right: Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett, Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, Associate Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh, and Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. Photograph by Fred Schilling, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States. Public domain.

The Social Construction of Criminality

Like every system created by human beings, the criminal justice system is a social construction. We have created and defined structures, roles, and institutions that we tacitly agree to abide by. Ideas such as justice, rehabilitation, "paying a debt to society," and criminality all have definitions that have changed over time and location.

For example, let's look briefly at the plant marijuana, which is frequently dried to be smoked, has oil extracted, or is otherwise ingested or applied. Is it a valuable medicine? Is it an illegal drug? Is it bad for you? Is it a comparable form of recreation to alcohol? Is it an essential service in the time of COVID-19? Are you a criminal if you use it? The answers to these questions vary based on location (federal, state, and county laws) and over time. In addition, your profession or your employer may find it to be criminal even if the state law does not. Cannabis flowers contain many different psychoactive compounds that are used for recreational or medicinal purposes. The plant goes by many different names: marijuana, pot, weed, dope, reefer, blunt, mota, 420, Mary Jane, and others.

From this example, you can see how a social construction can determine whether something (in this case, a plant) is perceived to be criminal, medicinal, or recreational. The most common use of marijuana for medical reasons is for chronic pain control, which has been found to be effective for millions of Americans (Grinspoon, 2020). Based on location, someone who uses this plant medicinally may be branded a criminal rather than a patient treating a medical problem. We will extend this idea to people: how social constructions such as gender, race, poverty, and sexuality translate into justice being interpreted and applied unevenly to different people based on **implicit bias** and the socially constructed difference of identities.

Race, Legal, and Extralegal Justice

We know that the original construction of equality in the United States actually referred to equality amongst White male landowners (as described at the start of this chapter). The purpose of this textbook is to examine the needs and experiences of current American families, and some exploration of history is helpful for context. There exists a disparity in the United States currently related to criminality and justice. This can be traced back to the poverty, bias, and institutional discrimination that Black people have faced not just during slavery but through post-emancipation Jim Crow laws and the racial caste system that limited income, wealth accumulation, and rights of African Americans. For example, Black people were limited from using bathrooms, drinking from water fountains, sitting in certain seats in restaurants and transportation, and generally segregated to separate locations in public spaces, including libraries and schools (figure 11.2). These laws lasted for about 100 years until the Civil Rights Act was signed in 1968.



Figure 11.2. Many spaces and services were explicitly or implicitly segregated through most of the 20th century. "White and Colored People's Water Fountains" by David Wilson. License: CC BY 2.0.

A result of these laws was the **criminalization** of everyday actions by Black people, performed in spaces that were either explicitly or implicitly for White people. This resulted in both formal punishment, such as imprisonment, but also the beating and lynching of Black people. Families continued to be broken up, not through slavery, but now through violence, imprisonment, and death for the socially constructed criminality of being in the wrong place or talking with the wrong person. Multiracial interactions were stigmatized, and Black men were consistently punished for any interaction with a White woman. Class, gender, and race intersected in a way that often led to Black men being killed or imprisoned by legal or extralegal means.

In February 2020, Ahmaud Arbery was killed while out jogging. Three men believed that he looked "suspicious" and similar to someone who committed a burglary weeks earlier, so they armed themselves with a shotgun and a handgun, chased him, and shot him dead. *The New York Times* reported that many Black people who jog to stay fit and relieve stress wrote about the dangers of "running while Black." They describe staying in parks rather than running on neighborhood streets, wearing brightly colored shirts and shoes to signify that they are joggers, avoiding new areas, and taking care to call out "hello" or "excuse me" in order to signal to people that they are friendly (figure 11.3). These actions are intended to keep people from harassing or harming them (Futterman & Minsberg, 2020).

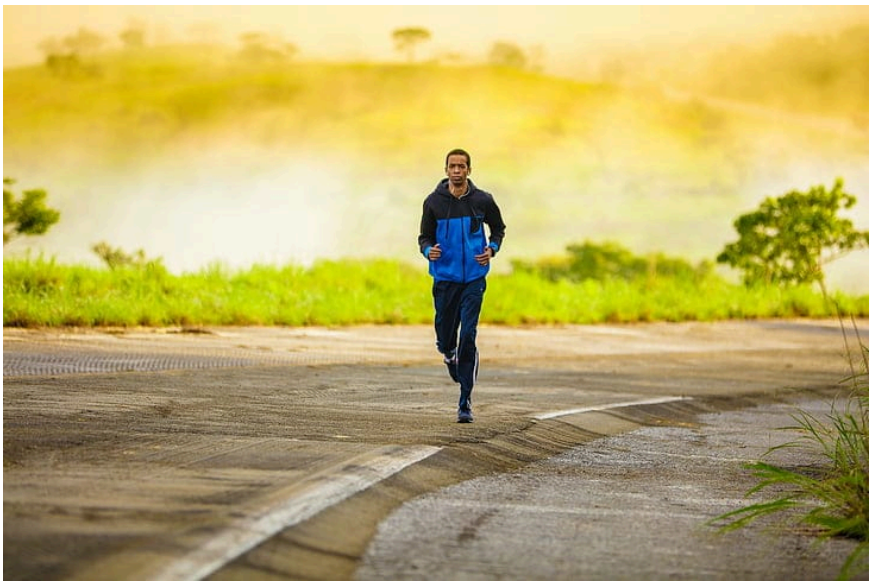


Figure 11.3. Listening to music while running in a beautiful place is a freedom that many seek, but can be more dangerous based on your social identities. "Man wearing blue and black jacket and pants running on road" on Pickpik.com. License: Royalty Free on pickpik.com

The Criminalization of Poverty

Organizations such as the American Bar Association and media outlets like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have all written extensively about the criminalization of poverty. Many crimes are punished by fees and fines in addition to some kind of **incarceration** (jail, prison, probation, or parole sentences). Incarceration affects individuals and families by the loss of autonomy, parenting and family connections, as well as loss of income (figure 11.4). Many people will lose their jobs, so even when they finish their sentence, they will be unemployed. Finding employment and housing is more difficult with a criminal record. Add on top of this, there is the payment of fines and fees.



Figure 11.4. About half of the adults in the United States have had a family member incarcerated for one or more nights in prison. Photograph by Wendy Alvarez. License: Unsplash license.

Families with accumulated wealth and higher incomes will be able to pay these fees and fines more quickly than a family that has not accumulated wealth or has a low-paying job. In some states, if interest and additional fees accrue, it can lead to additional incarceration, loss of a driving license, or loss of an occupational license, making it more difficult to earn money with which to pay the fines. This affects the financial, physical, and mental health of families. Examples such as a 12-month sentence for stealing a can of beer, three days in jail for catching a fish off-season, and 22 days in jail for not having enough money to pay fees when

appearing in court are cited by the National Public Radio investigation into court fees and the incarceration of poor people who cannot pay them. This shows how being poor more likely results in becoming a "criminal." You can listen to the 12-minute report here: As Court Fees Rise, the Poor are Paying the Price.

Incarcerated Family Members

Approximately half of all adults in the United States have had an immediate family member incarcerated for one or more nights in prison, raising incarceration in the United States to the level of a social problem. Incarceration disproportionately impacts low-income families and POC. Compared to White adults, Black adults are three times more likely to have had a family member incarcerated, and Latine adults are 1.7 times more likely to have had a family member incarcerated for more than one year. Adults with lower household incomes (less than $25,000) are three times more likely than adults with a household income of $100,000 or more to have a family member incarcerated for a year or more.

In the following essay, Human Services major Heather Denherder describes her experience with working through her addiction-associated criminal background and toward her career passion of working with families. Along the way, she uncovered realizations about the role that race plays in her journey.

In Focus: Career, Criminality, and Race

During my Human Services practicum class, I worked with justice-involved students (people who have experience with jail, prison, parole, or probation), and I saw a trend of discrimination. This comes not from anyone working at my site but from their experience when they tell their stories about not being able to find work or housing and some not being able to go into the field they are interested in because they have a criminal record. Even though they have changed the law and employers can no longer ask if you have a criminal record on work applications, it can still come up in the interview.

I myself have a criminal record, and when I was deciding what I wanted to do for a career, I received a lot of flak not only from people just looking in from the outside but also from people working within the system. My drug counselor once informed me that I would never be certified by the state or allowed to work with children, even if I had a degree. I struggled with the thought of getting my Human Services degree and then not being able to work in the field I wanted, not because I wasn't equipped to, but because of a bad decision when I was young.

I have not only been able to complete a degree in the field I want to work in but I have also been approved by the state of Oregon to work with children. Currently, I am working with an educator who has been involved with the justice system. I believe this has been possible for both of us not just through our own hard work and determination but also because we benefit from White privilege. In the society we live in today, we are still the "power" race. I am lucky enough to be working at a site that treats everyone equally, and they just want to help everyone no matter what your race is or what your background looks like. They want to teach/guide you in being successful not only as a college student but also as a functioning member of society once they have a certificate.

My mentor believes that everyone is capable of change as long as they have the correct tools, support, and know-how to use the tools they have been given. I was listening to one of the students talking about how hard it is for her to even decide what field of study to go into because of her criminal history and that she was told she would never be able to get a job in that field because of her history. She couldn't decide what or if she even wanted to continue with school, and she was crying and felt defeated.

I could definitely relate to her because that was me when I first came back to school. I often felt defeated because I felt the "felon" label was going to follow me for the rest of my life. What I know now is that even if we are labeled, we can overcome the stigma through hard work and determination.

When I was trying to find a placement for the Human Services practicum, I could not find one. It wasn't because I wasn't qualified or even because of my felonies, but because it hadn't been long enough since I was released from parole. Once again, I felt completely defeated. Being open and honest about my past put me right where I needed to be. If you are a minority with a label, it can be more difficult to overcome such stigmas.

It is all too often that being White has become the most powerful race not only in the workplace but also in the eyes of the law. It is prevalent in the legal system. How many times have you seen or heard about a person of privilege, a White person, committing a crime? I have very rarely heard it was a "White person that attacked me," instead I hear the perpetrator described as a "person" whereas POC are usually called out by race or ethnicity, such as saying a "Black person attacked me."

In 2009, the statistics for individuals incarcerated as Black males were six times higher than White males. I know that even though I have been to prison, there is a higher chance of me being able to find a job in any field than a minority with the same criminal history as me. I think that social media and the news often highlight the crimes of minorities while brushing the crimes of Whites under the rug. How many serial killers have you seen that are anything but White? I personally cannot think of one that isn't White, yet when we think of a murderer, we think of POC. Why is that? Social media and the news are huge indicators of what society is going to see and know about. It is sometimes hard for White people to acknowledge that they are in a position of power when it comes to race. Being in college, talking with others, and doing research helped me see that White people hold the power in most situations.

The intersections of our social identities will overlap with the identities of those who make the policies and laws, those who enforce them, and those who make the judgments that impact incarceration, parole, probation, and future experiences. Paying attention to these overlaps and attempting to overhaul our systems to correct discrimination that is built into our psyches and our institutions will create more equitable opportunity, treatment, and rights for all families.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=967#h5p-45

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11.3: The Intersectionality of Justice

Alexis Castaneda-Perez

Preface

As a psychology major, I was surprised to find myself contributing and writing for a Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) open textbook. “What does any of this have to do with the human psyche?” was something I was asking myself before I started researching and writing. While we learned of intersectionality in HDFS 201, I didn’t really start to fully grasp the concept until I started writing for this project. It’s not just sociology and psychology that come into play when we talk about social justice, but instead, a strong cooperation of multiple disciplines is involved in understanding how inequality and injustice occur. Everything is connected whether we realize it or not.

After that happened during the spring and summer of 2020, it feels very gratifying to try and help educate others on topics and ideas that I myself didn’t fully understand when I began writing. Challenging myself to do this project has only made me a better student. If there’s anything that I would like for someone to take away from this reading, it’s this: for some, it is easy to deny that many of the ideas discussed (such as intersectionality and institutional racism) exist. Human civilization and society stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. Many modern institutions and values in the United States were founded on the antiquated idea that those pertaining to a certain class and race were superior to others. Context matters, and it shouldn’t be ignored.

With that being said, I want to thank everyone who collaborated on this project for being some of the most open-minded and friendly people I’ve met!

Following is a series of short essays that explore various groups who experience injustice and the ways that social identities overlap with the justice system.

What Does Justice Look Like?

The last few words of the United States Pledge of Allegiance are: “with liberty and justice for all.” This ideal is part of our nation’s identity, but the unfortunate reality is that our justice system wasn’t ever made to be fair. The first form of police in the southern part of the United States were slave patrols (Potter, n.d.). Their purpose was to capture escaped enslaved people, prevent further escape, and discipline those enslaved. For hundreds of years in the United States, the justice system’s job was to enforce the idea of White supremacy and to limit the rights of women and POC. This can be seen in Supreme Court cases such as Dred Scott V. Sandford, where the Supreme Court ruled that anyone with African ancestry could never become a citizen of the United States and, therefore, not be able to sue in federal court. The Supreme Court also seized this opportunity to rule that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional. This meant that the federal government couldn’t prevent slavery in certain territories. This decision was unsurprising to many Americans because seven of the nine Supreme Court justices at the time of the Dred Scott decision had been appointed by pro-slavery presidents (PBS, n.d.). Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, who authored the majority opinion for the Dred Scott case, wrote in reference to the legal status of African Americans, “They are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word ‘citizens’ in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States” (Brewer & Heitzeg, 2008).

While there may not be laws, rules, and regulations that explicitly target POC today, there do exist many for which their entire origins are based on racism and prejudice (see Chapter 8). In many cases, those whose duty is to exercise the law simply choose to ignore crimes that are being committed against POC. For example, 37% of cases involving missing/disappeared Native American women are dismissed by the U.S. Attorney’s Office (National Indian Council on Aging, 2019).

In the “Going Deeper” section of this chapter, there is a podcast and activity related to missing and murdered Indigenous women that includes data as well as interviews with the parents of murdered Indigenous women.

This is a pattern that goes back to at least the 1920s when local law enforcement neglected to properly investigate murdered Native Americans during the infamous “Osage Indian murders,” as they have been called. These murders show one of the more blatant attempts of a government circumventing justice in order to oppress and marginalize a group of minorities. The Osage people of Kansas were relocated to a reservation in Oklahoma around 1870. What later became known as the Osage reservation

is located on top of one of the largest oil deposits in the country. As a result of this, the Osage people saw an extraordinary increase in wealth. The United States Congress eventually passed a law requiring a guardian to assume control of every Osage's finances until they were deemed "competent." The guardians were, of course, always White males, who usually didn't have the best interests of the Osage in mind, often defrauding them.

"Justice" Depends on Race

There currently exists a disparity in the United States that has been rapidly increasing, particularly within the last two decades. African Americans face harsher punishments than a White person would for committing the exact same crime. If you compare the sentence of a Black person and a White person for a similar crime, Black people serve sentences around 19% longer than White people do on average. Not only do Black people serve longer sentences, but the more Afrocentric features someone has, the more likely they are to be sentenced to death (United States Sentencing Commission, 2017).

This recent disparity, while having many causes, can largely be attributed to the Supreme Court ruling on the case of United States V. Booker. The Supreme Court ruled that judges didn't have to strictly adhere to mandatory sentencing regulations that were created in 1984 under the Sentencing Reform Act, a bipartisan bill that aimed to increase fairness and consistency of sentences (whether this reform actually worked could be debated as well, because the Reagan administration doubled down on Nixon's War on Drugs during his presidency; the policies introduced during this time disproportionately targeted POC).

Instead, the federal government found that the United States V. Booker ruling actually has been counterproductive to the Sentencing Reform Act and actually created more sentences inconsistent with regulations and a greater racial disparity as well (U.S. Department of Justice, 2006). Because judges can use the regulations as just advisory, their biases and preconceived notions of POC have a much larger role in the sentencing of minorities than they did before 1984.

The War on Drugs

Originally coined by former president Richard Nixon, the War on Drugs was first started as a campaign by the Nixon administration. Although it wasn't known as "the War on Drugs" until 1971, drug reform in the United States dates back many years, all the way to the beginning of the 20th century when the first drug prohibition policies were being passed. The Harrison Narcotics Tax of 1914 was one of the first federal laws to regulate drugs (PBS, n.d.). On paper, the aims of the Nixon campaign were to try and shrink the drug trade in the United States and prevent new addicts through various policies (Nixon, 1971), which included the creation of the Drug Enforcement Agency and giving increased funding to law enforcement agencies (LEA) to actively seek out drug charges. Drug crime was so low on the priority list for most LEAs when the "war" started that many agencies did not try to enforce the new policy.

To try and get all LEA to participate in the war, the federal government provided them with a few incentives. Firstly, they could compete to receive federal cash grants. This allowed many agencies to expand their number of officers and to start a new narcotics task force in order to increase the number of arrests. Simply put, more arrests and convictions equal more money for the agency. In addition to giving money to LEA, the federal government also provided cooperating agencies with intelligence, special training, and equipment in order to carry out the war. To top it all off, the government let agencies keep almost all of the money that they seized in drug raids (Alexander, 2020). Overall, this system has led to issues such as the militarization of the police and an increase of POC in prison for nonviolent crimes.

The Militarization of Police

As a direct result of the War on Drugs, the police in the United States are given more freedom and weaponry than ever before, resulting in the **militarization** or the transformation of a civilian agency to become more like the military. Concerns have been raised recently regarding what is called "Warrior Culture" that is present in many police departments, where officers are encouraged to take a "warrior's mindset." This sometimes is in contrast to academy training and is instead encouraged by fellow officers, but not always. The warrior mindset can also be understood as an "Us vs Them" form of thinking.

Police are being taught that they live in a hostile environment that is out to get them (Stoughton, 2015). Rookie officers are told constantly that their lives are in danger and that they should be scared or else they could die. Many departments say that their first and immediate goal is to make sure officers are unharmed and get home safely; this tends to foster fear in officers and causes overestimation of danger. As a result, officers are more likely to treat ordinary citizens as a threat and to escalate the situation entirely. This counterintuitively raises the risk of death for both police officers and citizens.

In order to benefit our communities to the best of their ability, police must work closely with the communities that they are serving. A heavily armed and paranoid police force does not mesh well with people who are growing ever more distrustful of police. For many decades, national confidence and trust in the police have remained at around 60% (Tyler, 2011). Unsurprisingly, trust and confidence in the police is much lower in minority communities. African Americans' trust in the police sits at just 31% (Tyler, 2005). While minority communities could greatly benefit from a well-trained police presence, they are often disproportionately arrested, harassed, disrespected, and made victims of police brutality.

Police Brutality

> ...the senseless acts of killings of these young boys out there....This is reality, this is my world, this is what I talk about in my music. You can't delude that. Me being on a cop car, that's a performance piece after these senseless acts....Hip-hop is not the problem. Our reality is the problem of the situation. This is our music. This is us expressing ourselves.
> —Kendrick Lamar



Figure 11.5. Kendrick Lamar sees hip-hop as an expression of the problem of racism, not part of the problem itself. Kendrick Lamar by Andrew Stephenson for The Come Up Show. License: CC BY-ND 2.0.

During the 2015 BET Awards, Kendrick Lamar performed his hit song "Alright" from his album *To Pimp a Butterfly*, whose lyrics have been praised by critics for being politically charged and a socially relevant commentary on the struggles of the modern African American (figure 11.5). At some point in the performance, Lamar stood on top of a police car that had been vandalized, a symbolic statement for many viewers showcasing his support for those protesting the killing of unarmed Black men and condemning the police for their actions. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement was founded in 2013 by three women in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, shown in figure 11.6 (*Black Lives Matter Herstory*, n.d.). In 2014 and 2015, many high-profile cases of police brutality emerged. To name a few: Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, and Freddie Gray. There were over 1,059 known police killings in the United States in 2014 (Mapping Police Violence, n.d.), many of whom were unarmed. It was during this year that the BLM movement gained more traction.



Figure 11.6. Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi created a Black-centered political will and movement-building project called #BlackLivesMatter. "TEDWomen2016_20161027_0MA12721_1920" by Marla Aufmuth/TED. License: CC BY-NC 2.0.

Lamar faced backlash from those critical of the BLM movement. Lyrics such as "...and we hate po-po, wanna kill us dead in the streets fo sho" got the attention of *Fox News* pundit Geraldo Rivera, who said, "This is why I say that hip-hop has done more damage to young African Americans than racism in recent years. This is exactly the wrong message." Lamar responded by saying, "Hip-hop is not the problem. Our reality is the problem of the situation. This is us expressing ourselves."

POC are more likely than White people to be victims of police brutality, African American men, Native American/Alaskan Native women, and Latino men, to be more specific. African American men are the most likely out of all races to be victims. Black men face a one in 1,000 chance of being killed by police throughout their lifetime (Edwards et al., 2019). The blame for all of this is all too often placed on POC. Kendrick Lamar's words are affirming for many young people and still ring true today. With the 2020 deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the United States has seen a surge in protests across all 50 states (Burch et al., 2020).

There are many parallels that can be drawn from the civil rights movement of the 1960s as well as the 1992 Los Angeles riots, but there is a unique history happening right in front of our eyes. With the relatively recent rise of smartphone cameras, people can now capture police brutality with relative ease, as well as the ability to upload it straight to the internet as it happens. While some would hurry to dismiss the problem of police abusing their power as just "a few bad apples," we can now see that police brutality isn't a rare or isolated incident. There is a clear pattern of abuse, one that has been occurring in this country for centuries. It is clear that police brutality is a systemic problem in the United States.

Gender, Underrepresentation, and Intersectionality

With many of the high-profile cases of police brutality being about men, women of color are often forgotten in the discussion. Due to this, there, unfortunately, are not many studies that particularly focus on the experiences of women of color. The most oppressed voices are usually the least heard. Women of color are at the intersection of gender and race and are victims of police violence just as much as men of color. Physical violence isn't the only way women suffer at the hands of the police; they are also more likely to face sexual assault.

Sexual assault is the second most reported form of police misconduct in the United States (Bennett, 2018; National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project, 2010). Transgender women are most vulnerable to sexual violence by the police. Fifteen percent of transgender women report being sexually assaulted while in police custody, while African American transgender women report an astounding 32% assault rate (Office of Justice Programs, 2014). Some of these instances of sexual violence occur during "searches," where officers look for narcotics or other paraphernalia. Black men are also often victims of police sexual violence (Chan, 2007). During an investigation by *Associated Press News* on police sexual misconduct, it was discovered that over 1,000 police officers lost their jobs over a six-year period for sex-related crimes (Sedensky, 2015). The Say Her Name movement was started to bring light to the issues women of color face. We can quickly see a pattern forming. The more instances of intersectionality in your life, the more likely you are to be a victim of violence and systematic oppression.

Comprehension Self Check

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11.4: Treatment, Jail, or Justice?

Christopher Byers

Preface

I always thought of myself as someone who has been the underdog in life. From my sister's death, to homelessness, to drug addiction, I thought I had it worse than anyone in the world. My negative experiences played a role in shaping my belief systems about myself and the world around me and, in a way, encapsulated my thinking by keeping me "unique." But then, that all began to change for me.

It all started with a class. In an HDFS class at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC), I was introduced to a concept that altered my perception of the world and how I fit into it in a significant way. I began to learn how maybe after all these years of believing I had a hard life and everyone had it easy, this was not the case. I learned about concepts such as privilege, sociological imagination, equity, social constructivism, and many other concepts like those that helped me to slowly and, sometimes painfully, open my eyes to the reality of life.

When I learned about privilege, I had the hardest time wrapping my head around that one. How could I, someone whose sister died and who experienced homelessness and drug addiction, be privileged? I thought at first that it didn't apply to me. However, through much internal reflection, writing, and processing with people in my life and with my professor, I began to slowly understand what privilege means. That concept alone was a catalyst for me to dive further into researching injustice in the United States. It really inspired me to do a lot of deep reflective work on my own social identity and what it means to be who I am in the United States. This work has become some of the most important work I have ever done in my life. I see it as a path of healing not only for myself but for many of us who choose to seek it.

Mental Health and Substance Use

> Humans have been ingesting drugs for thousands of years. And throughout recorded time, significant numbers of nearly every society on earth have used one or more drugs to achieve certain desired physical or mental states. Drug use comes close to being universal, both worldwide and throughout history.
> —Erich Goode

To the extent that social inequality, social interaction, and drug culture contribute to substance use, it is a mistake to attribute substance use only to biological and psychological factors. While these factors do play a role, it would be a mistake to ignore the social environments in which people participate in substance use. The role that the family plays in substance use potential is vastly underestimated. Weak family bonds and school connections are often seen as a major role in the development of substance use in adolescents. Weak bonds to family members prompt adolescents to be less likely to conform to conventional norms and more likely to engage in using drugs and other deviant behavior. Healthy family bonds, coping with trauma, learning how to identify feelings, and open communication all play a positive role in the reduction and prevention of potential substance use by family members in the future.

Mental Health

So what exactly is mental health? And how is it defined today? Well, first, let's shine a brief but illuminating light on the history of mental disorders in the United States. The mentally ill have been treated very poorly for hundreds of years. In the 1800s, it was believed that mental illness was caused by demonic possession, witchcraft, or an angry god.

For example, in medieval times, abnormal behaviors were viewed as a sign that a person was possessed by demons. This was not an uncommon societal belief in the 1700s. The idea that mental illness was the result of demonic possession by either an evil spirit or an evil god incorrectly attributed all inexplicable phenomena to deities deemed either good or evil (Introduction To Psychology, n.d). The prevailing theories of psychopathology, derived from folklore and inadequate scientific beliefs, are still perpetuated today. Although science has a better understanding of mental health, it is still common for stigma, discrimination, and ignorance to be the deciding factors in how people with mental health are cared for and treated.

Psychological disorders are very common in the United States, yet there is still a great deal of inequity that encompasses mental health issues. Stigma, labeling, ignorance, discrimination, and judgment are all still very prevalent and harsh realities in our society today. The biological, sociological, physiological, and cultural determinants of mental health disorders vary from case to case, and most mental health issues are still often difficult to understand, as the roots of mental illness are often misunderstood (figure 11.7).



Figure 11.7. Mental health is a part of our overall health. “One and Other-Mental Health” by Feggy Art. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Our society has made a lot of progress in understanding how some mental health disorders operate, but we still have a ways to go until we as a society can see mental health through a collective, compassionate lens. It is important to remember that those who struggle with psychological disorders are not their disorder. It is something they have, through no fault of their own. As with cancer and diabetes, these people who have psychological disorders often suffer from debilitating, often painful conditions through no choice of their own. These individuals deserve to be treated and viewed with compassion, dignity, and understanding.

Substance Use Disorder

So what exactly is the relationship between substance use disorder and mental health? **Substance use disorder (SUD)** is a disease that affects the brain and includes the uncontrolled use of something despite harmful consequences (sometimes called substance abuse). SUD and mental health are interconnecting and overlapping systems. There have been many years of stigma, discrimination, and misunderstanding toward people who have both mental health issues and SUD issues. Many people who suffer from SUD often have unaddressed trauma, depression, anxiety, and environmental and genetic factors that contribute to the use of substances as a way to self-medicate and cope with how they feel, regardless of the negative consequences that might happen as a result of using.

For example, conduct disorder and antisocial personality disorder are strongly associated with the development of both substance use and serious mental illness such as major depression and bipolar disorder. Some SUD can even mimic mental health issues, making a diagnosis difficult without dealing with the SUD issues first (Introduction To Psychology, n.d). Psychopharmacological reactions to withdrawal can also induce psychiatric symptoms and exacerbate underlying mental health issues for people as well. Mental health issues are interconnected with SUD. Most people who practice counseling often deal with the SUD issues with a client and then proceed to determine if that individual is suffering from mental health issues after the SUD is addressed.

The Criminalization of Drugs

Although slavery has been abolished and Jim Crow laws are no longer legal, the systems that have oppressed POC and marginalized communities for over 300 years continue (Alexander, 2020). It can be argued that the criminal justice system and the legislation and policies that were created to punish drug users and drug crimes were designed to perpetuate discrimination and oppression of POC at disproportionate rates.

A significant aspect of the War on Drugs, a piece of legislation that disproportionately affected POC in the United States,

was that it imposed mandatory minimum sentencing laws that sent nonviolent drug offenders to prison rather than enrolling them in treatment programs. Forty-three percent of inmates in the U.S. are POC, a figure that surpasses the percentage of this demographic group in the U.S., which is approximately 21 percent (BOP Statistics,n.d.; U.S. Census bureau quickfacts: United states. n.d.). That means that POC are greatly overrepresented in the U.S. criminal justice system. The United States has the highest incarceration rates for drug-related crimes. Figure 11.8, based on the article "The Black/White Marijuana Arrest Gap, in Nine Charts," demonstrates the implicit bias our justice system still has for POC in the United States.

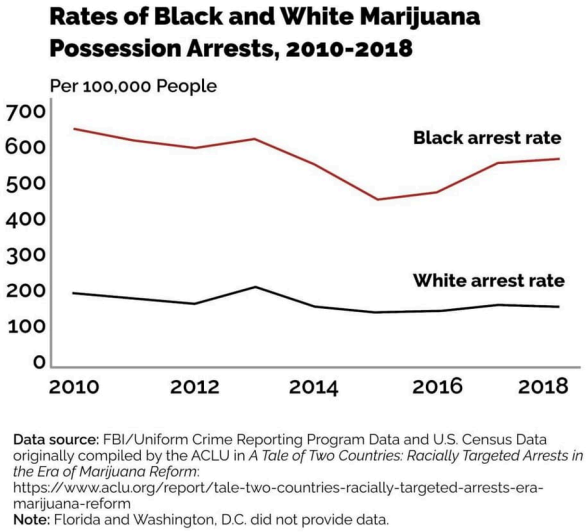


Figure 11.8. Black people are disproportionately arrested for marijuana possession compared to White people. Image description. "Rates of Black and White Marijuana Possession Arrests, 2010–2018" by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi-Hooper. License: CC BY 4.0.

It is a sad and common societal view that addicts and SUD users are lesser human beings, a lower standard of individual than the rest of society. This is an example of stigma. This overarching and negative view of people who struggle with SUD plays a role in the passing of policies and criminalization of millions of people every year in the United States, which disproportionately affects families of color. When POC are targeted for nonviolent drug-related crimes, they are more likely to receive harsher punishments than White people. This has damaging consequences for POC and their families, with the heads of households usually being the ones who receive these harsher punishments.

Women of color have been arrested at rates far higher than White women, even though they use drugs at a rate equal to or lower than White women (ACLU, 2004). Furthermore, according to Bureau of Justice statistics from 2007, nearly two-thirds of U.S. women prisoners had children under 18 years of age (Glaze and Maruschak, 2010). Before incarceration, disproportionately, these women were the primary caregivers to their children and other family members, so the impact on children, families, and communities is substantial when women are imprisoned.

Inmates often engage in prison labor for less than minimum wage. When these individuals are incarcerated, corporations contract prison labor that produces millions of dollars in profit. Therefore, the incarceration of millions of people artificially deflates the unemployment rate (something politicians benefit from) and creates a cheap labor force that generates millions of dollars in profit for private corporations. How do we make sense of this? What does this say about the state of democracy in the United States?

When seen through an equity lens, we can establish some interesting points. One is that the rates that POC and White people use drugs are about the same, but one important factor plays a role in the disproportionate rates of incarceration for POC: implicit bias. People have subconscious ideas about who uses drugs in the United States. These ideas are based on false narratives derived from implicit biases that perpetuate the inequitable incarceration of POC. Secondly, the War on Drugs focused and funneled money into the punishment of and incarceration for drug-related offenses.

A question to ponder is this: what would society look like if, instead of punishing and criminalizing drug use and drug users, we used that money to focus on treatment, recovery centers, and social services?

Comprehension Self Check

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11.5: Real Laws, Real Families

Carla Medel

Preface

Now, going into my last year in undergrad and looking into graduate school for programs in counseling specifically designed for children and families, I would like to thank Liz for allowing me to be a part of this project. It has been one of the best experiences so far in my academic career. I think that, at first, it doesn't really make sense as to why I would be so passionate about something like this project, but I'll explain. All I have ever wanted is to see myself reflected in the things that I partake in, part of that being academic materials. As a Latinx woman and daughter of immigrants, I have never really gotten that, and it can truly take a toll on the way you view yourself and your people.

Because of the privilege I have of being able to make it into higher ed and be a part of this project, I wanted to use that to write about people like me, my parents, and my family so that more children don't see themselves as an "other," a little section of the text that no one really goes over. Things haven't been and aren't fair for those who identify as immigrants, but people like me have been a part of the United States before this land was even named, and we are here to stay. It's time for our stories to be told, too. Here, I'd like to explain several of the laws that affect not just families like mine but, tangentially, all families in the United States.

The Legal Process

"Just come here legally" is one of my most disliked phrases for immigrants because the process to do so is not as easy as the general public thinks. Immigrants, just like everyone else, seek to move because where they currently are isn't providing them what is needed to succeed. Unlike here in the United States, they cannot just move from one state to another to seek out those opportunities, as they do not exist there either. Instead, they need to leave the country. Some people have the time and money needed to try and apply for a visa or have a family member who is a United States citizen or legal permanent resident (LPR) sponsor them to become an LPR and are able to come to the United States that way.

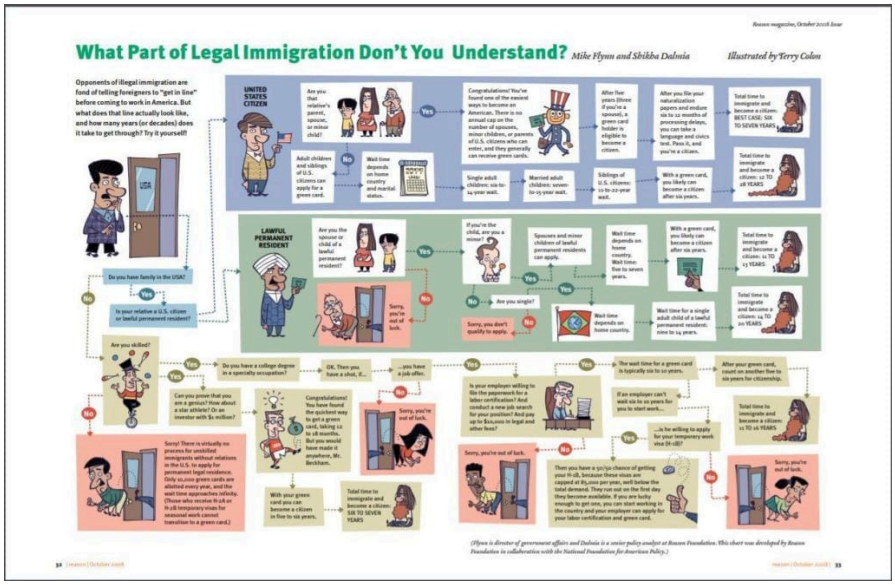


Figure 11.9. The process that people must follow to legally immigrate is actually very complicated and long. Click here to view a larger version of the graphic. "What Part of Legal Immigration Don't You Understand?:The Legal Process" © Terry Colon, Mike Flynn, and Shikha Dalmia, *Reason Magazine* and Reason.com. Used with permission.

Immigrating can take anywhere from 6 to 28 years and will cost anywhere from $750 to $1,225 per person (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). Many people will not be able to afford this route, and it is even worse for others if their current situation is more urgent and they don't have time to wait. The chart pictured in figure 11.9 is so complicated that it

can't be reproduced legibly in this textbook! Be sure to click here to view a larger, readable version. If legal immigration was easy, accessible, and fast, it's very unlikely that people wouldn't risk their lives entering and living in the United States without documentation.

Next, let's look at two important programs that affect immigrant families.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a policy created under the Obama administration on June 15, 2012. Individuals who meet the following criteria are eligible for DACA:

- Are under 31 years of age as of June 15, 2012.
- Came to the United States while under the age of 16.
- Have continuously resided in the United States from June 15, 2007, to the present.
- Entered the United States without inspection or fell out of lawful visa status before June 15, 2012.
- Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making the request for consideration of DACA with USCIS.
- Are currently in school, have graduated from high school, have obtained a GED, or have been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or armed forces.
- Have not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor, or more than three misdemeanors of any kind.
- Do not pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Applicants have to provide evidence of the above criteria. In addition, every applicant must complete and pass a biographic and biometric background check. An applicant who is granted DACA is not considered to have legal status but will not be deemed to be accruing unlawful presence in the United States during the time period when their DACA is in effect. DACA allows individuals to live in the United States without fear of deportation and with work authorization. DACA is temporary as it only lasts two years; every two years, the individual will need to reapply, which means submitting an application, getting biometrics done, and paying a fee of $495.

At its peak, there were up to about 800,000 people who were DACA recipients, but those numbers dramatically declined during the Trump Administration due to fear of what would happen to the DACA program. The number of people on DACA now is closer to 600,000 total.

DACA has been on the line since Donald Trump took the presidency, having DACA recipients live in limbo, unsure of what their future would look like. Even after waiting years for the Supreme Court to make a decision on DACA during this presidency, that decision is not being respected. The Supreme Court decided in July 2020 that Donald Trump's decision to rescind DACA was made without the proper steps. Because of this decision, DACA should have been restored to its original form, open to new applicants and advance parole, with a special permit for international travel available to current recipients—but the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has declared that they will reject all initial DACA requests who have not previously been granted DACA. It also eliminates the possibility of DACA recipients being granted advance parole. Requests for renewal were changed from a two-year period to a one-year period (National Immigration Law Center, 2020). Not even the highest courts have been able to protect these young people.

Here is one of many stories from the National Immigration Law Center's website (National Immigration Law Center, n.d.). This website offers many resources for immigrants. In addition, it contains valuable resources for educators and others who are working with immigrant families.

In Focus: DACA, A Personal Account

The following story by Esmeralda (a pseudonym), was posted on the National Immigration Law Center's website:

> I am a current DACA recipient. Given that I am a member of a multi–[immigration] status family, DACA has allowed me to do more for my family, financially and emotionally.
>
> In regard to education, DACA gave me access to the resources I could never afford prior. Having to experience these hardships, I dedicated my life to support the diverse population of students in California, from pre-K to higher education.

DACA allowed me to complete my A.A. and transfer to a four-year institution. I was finally able to complete my bachelor's degree. After 10 long years, this past May, I graduated with a master's and would love to continue on to a Ph.D.

DACA gave me access to a humane job with a living wage. DACA allowed me to have a driver's license. Having an actual identity in this country gave me life. I could live without my everyday fear of being deported or having to drive without a license.

DACA gave me access to open a bank account with a credit line, and I would love to one day do something with that credit, like invest in the country I consider my home: the United States.

DACA changed my life for the best: being able to legally drive, travel to other states in the country, finish my degrees, have a fulfilling job, and give back to my community.

Most importantly, DACA gave me life.

DREAM Act

The federal Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was first proposed in 2001 by a bipartisan team of senators and has been reintroduced multiple times, but it has not passed. This bill would protect DREAMers from deportation and give them an opportunity to obtain legal status if they meet certain requirements. This is what most DREAMers (young undocumented immigrants) are fighting for (National Immigration Forum, 2017).

The DREAM Act would create a conditional permanent resident status valid for up to eight years for young undocumented immigrants that would protect them from deportation, allow them to work legally in the United States, and permit them to travel outside the country. To qualify for conditional permanent resident status, young undocumented immigrants would need to meet the following requirements (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020):

- Through documentation described in the bill, establish that they were brought to the United States at age 17 or younger and have lived continuously in the United States for at least four years prior to the bill's enactment;
- Pass a government background check, demonstrate "good moral character" with no felony or multiple misdemeanor convictions, submit biometric and biographic data, and undergo a biometric and medical exam;
- Demonstrate they have been admitted to a college or university, have earned a high school diploma, or are in the process of earning a high school diploma or an equivalent; and
- Pay a fee.

The bill would automatically grant conditional permanent resident status to DACA recipients who still meet the requirements needed to obtain DACA. Conditional permanent resident status can be changed to lawful permanent resident status by:

- Maintaining continuous residence in the United States;
- Meeting one of the following three requirements:

- Completion of at least two years of military service,
- Graduation from a college or university or completion of at least two years of a bachelor's or higher degree program in the United States or
- Employment for a period totaling at least three years;

- Demonstrating an ability to read, write, and speak English and an understanding of American history, principles, and form of government;
- Passing a government background check, continuing to demonstrate "good moral character" without felony or multiple misdemeanor convictions, submitting biometric and biographic data and undergoing a biometric and medical exam; and
- Paying a fee.

It is devastating to acknowledge the number of people, many of them asylum seekers, who are held at the border by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), as shown in figure 11.10.



Figure 11.10. Many people have died while waiting for hearings while in ICE custody. “Rest in Power” © @unitedwedream. Arranged by Carla Medel. License: Fair Use.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=975#h5p-48

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11.6: Looking Ahead- Immigrant Families

There is a great deal of discussion in this country about the politics, legality, and ethics of our immigration practices. In this text, we discuss some of the aspects that directly affect immigrant families and their descendants who are living in the United States right now. As discussed in Chapter 1, laws have primarily been designed to foster inexpensive labor (the immigrants) to benefit the existing landowners, business owners, and consumers already residing in the country. Regardless of employment status, wage, and purpose for coming to this country, these families have the same needs as other residents. In addition, they are navigating new structures such as the health care and insurance system, differing government practices, and perhaps a new language at the same time as they are caring for their children, accessing schooling, finding a place to live, and fostering healthy family routines. It is difficult to also advocate for needed services, as pictured in figure 11.11.



Figure 11.11. Vietnamese members speak to a state representative at the Washington State Capitol. “Vietnamese Members Speak to Representative Gerry Pollet” by OneAmerica. License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

The authors view all families, regardless of documentation status, as “contemporary families in the United States,” the subjects of this course and this textbook. We believe that the well-being of each family in the United States is of value in and of itself. In addition, every family affects all the other families within the spheres of the neighborhood, the places of worship, the retail establishments, schools, parks, and employment. When reading about the laws that affect immigrant families and the ways in which employment and citizenship practices reflect a lack of justice, think about these families’ needs and rights just as you would for any other family.

Interwoven Families

When we think about immigrant families, we cannot separate them from all of us. As the quilt pictured in figure 11.12, we are all not only connected, but we support each other in complex and in ways that are sometimes difficult to decipher.



Figure 11.12. Interwoven patterns are fascinating to study and complicated to understand. “Quilt – Stars and Interwoven Steps” by Ramson. License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

When we talk about how immigrant families affect other families in the United States, we must understand that immigrant families are deeply interwoven into communities, schools, for-profit businesses, services, and all aspects of society. Kinship groups themselves can be mixed, made up of recent immigrants, second-generation citizens, Indigenous people, and citizens whose families have lived in the United States for hundreds of years. It’s difficult to unwind the complexity of these relationships, but it is critical to understand that we are intertwined and to continue to educate ourselves about these economic, familial, and societal relationships.

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11.7: Going Deeper

Having read and thought about justice from a variety of lenses, this page has some resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- If you would like to more clearly understand the structure and interrelationships of the government and justice systems, these openly licensed and free texts are useful:
  - American Government, 2nd Edition from the University of Oklahoma
  - Introduction to the American Criminal Justice System from Southern Oregon University
- Learn more about definitions and philosophy of justice with *What Is Justice? Crash Course Philosophy #40*, a 10-minute video.
- For recent history and up-to-date changes about cannabis legality, consult the Cannabis in the United States page here.
- Learn more about the Osage Indian murders here.
- Want to know more about the Say Her Name movement? This is the place.
  - Click here to read more of the personal stories from the National Immigration Law Center.

Reflective Questions

1. How is justice typically defined? How does it apply to families in the United States?
2. What are some examples of these kinds of justice that you have read about in this chapter (or other parts of the textbook)?
   1. Procedural
   2. Distributive
   3. Retributive
   4. Restorative
3. What do the founding documents of our country tell us about justice?
4. How do race, ethnicity, gender, immigration and socioeconomic status intersect to create differing experiences with justice?
5. Reflect on the ways that the criminalization of poverty affects families.
6. Which chapters by the student authors (Heather Denherder, Alexis Castenada-Perez, Christopher Byers, and Carla Medel) can you relate to your own life or observations?
7. In what ways has your family experienced justice and injustice? What topics would you add to this chapter?

Key Terms

- **Criminalization:** the act of making an activity or person illegal by making their activity a criminal offense.
- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA):** a U.S. immigration policy that allows individuals who arrived in the United States as children to remain and work in the country for a renewable period of two years. This policy has been legalized and implemented inconsistently in the 2000s.

- **Implicit bias:** an unconscious tendency to favor one person, group, or point of view over another, usually based on social characteristics such as gender, sexuality, race, or socioeconomic status.
- **Incarceration:** being confined within a prison or jail.
- **Militarization:** the process of preparing for war or another conflict; can refer to the transformation of a civilian agency becoming more like a military operation.
- **Social justice:** focuses on equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal treatment as well as meaningful actions to correct past discrimination.
- **Substance Use Disorder (SUD):** a disease that affects the brain and includes the uncontrolled use of something despite harmful consequences (sometimes called substance abuse).

Activity: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

If you would like to understand the complexities surrounding the search for missing and murdered Indigenous women, listen to the *1A* podcast in figure 11.13.

https://the1a.org/segments/search-missing-murdered-indigenous-women/

In this podcast, you will hear interviews with the parents of murdered Indigenous women and learn about the data related to missing and murdered Indigenous women (timestamp 12:07), as well as what legal and police action is being taken on this issue.

Discussion Questions

- What did you hear or learn that was new to you?
- How does this lack of police and legal action related to missing and murdered Native American women relate to implicit bias, the social construction of difference, or other concepts you have studied in this text?
- This website tracks federal legislation related to missing and murdered Indigenous women. What is new since this podcast aired in 2020?
- What are some strategies (named in the podcast or via your own brainstorming) that would help bring more equity for Indigenous women?

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CHAPTER 12: VISUAL CULTURE

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how art shapes our understanding of the history of the United States.
2. Examine the role of dominant culture in defining “art.”
3. Discuss the ways that unintended cultural exposure affects families.
4. Analyze the effects of intersectionality on potential creators, artists, and art lovers.
5. Explain how socially constructed ideas about beauty affect one’s identity and family experience.
6. Examine visual media from an equity perspective.
7. Describe the value of creativity, art, and beauty to families in the United States.
8. Apply theoretical concepts related to creativity, art, and beauty to your own observations and experiences.

12.1: Chapter Reading Guide

12.2: Experience, Expression, and Equity

12.3: Cultural Exposure Can Be Unintentional

12.4: Historical Impact on Today’s Families

12.5: Television, Film, and Video Games

12.6: Beauty, Identity, and Academics

12.7: Looking Ahead- Lin-Manuel Miranda and Role Models

12.8: Going Deeper

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12.1: Chapter Reading Guide

You may wonder about the inclusion of art and beauty in a text that discusses the needs of families. On the other hand, you may ask, “Why only visual culture? What about music and other artistic expressions?” While all forms of artistic expression are important, here we will focus on the ways visual culture impacts families, both in terms of when it is viewed but also the ways it affects us, even when it is something we have not personally selected. It can be argued that American individuals and families need art both as individuals and as a society. As you read, think about the aspects of visual culture that have influenced you and your family.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. Preview those to have an idea of where you are headed. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Artistic representation:** the use of a medium, such as clay or paint, to construct a representation of the real thing. Artistic representations are constructions of reality.
- **Beauty ideals:** a specific set of beauty standards regarding traits that are ingrained in women throughout their lives.
- **Colorism:** prejudice or discrimination that favors people with lighter skin over those with darker skin, especially within a racial or ethnic group.
- **Eemphasized femininity:** a concept rooted in the patriarchy that women must conform to the needs and desires of men by compliance with the normative ideas of femininity.
- **Hegemonic masculinity:** a specific type of culturally valued masculinity tied to marriage, heterosexuality, and patriarchal authority that legitimizes men’s dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women, nonbinary people, gay men, and other marginalized groups of men.
- **“Ism”:** an oppressive and discriminatory attitude or belief.
- **Life chances:** a social science theory created by German sociologist Max Weber in 1920. The theory of life chances postulates that an individual’s opportunity to lead a successful and fulfilling life are correlated to a variety of factors, including social stratification, social class, social mobility, and social equality, all of which can give a person low or high life chances.
- **Male gaze:** the idealized notion of a heterosexual man as the intended audience in a way that facilitates men objectifying or sexualizing women and women seeing themselves as objects of men’s desire.
- **Objectification:** a social meaning imposed on one’s being that defines them as an object or thing, typically within a sexual context.
- **Protest art:** a way of using creative work to communicate used by activists and social movements.
- **Public art:** art in any medium whose form, function, and meaning are created for the general public, often through a public process.
- **Symbolic annihilation:** a concept that refers to how marginalized groups of people are left absent, condemned, or trivialized through mass media representations, instead portraying oppressive ideologies created and enforced by dominant groups.
- **Typecasting:** the act of casting a person in a media role, often based on physical appearance or stereotypes.
- **Visual culture:** combinations of visual events in which information, meaning, or pleasure are expressed tangibly or visibly.
- **Whiteness:** the quality of being light or White skinned in color and the normalization of White racial identity throughout history in the United States.

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12.2: Experience, Expression, and Equity

Christopher Byers; Elizabeth B. Pearce; and Carla Medel

> If you have only two pennies, spend the first on bread and the other on hyacinths for your soul.
> —Arab Proverb



Figure 12.1. This community mural of two boys in nature can be found in Comuna 13, a neighborhood in Medellín, Columbia. "Photograph of Street Art in Medellín, Colombia." License: CC0.

Visual culture is described as the combination of visual events in which "information, meaning, or pleasure" are communicated to the consumer (Mirzoeff, 1998). The information that we take in through our eyes is both immense and psychologically powerful, affecting us in ways that take time and cognition to understand (figure 12.1). It is the intent of this chapter to highlight the ways in which visual culture affects families, both in the way we view ourselves and in the ways we can access resources such as education, employment, and wealth.

Art is one way people share ideas, express themselves, and communicate. Consider the print of Claude Monet's *The Water Lily Pond* hanging in your doctor's office (figure 12.2). What about the graffiti you passed on the way to the bus stop? Artistic expression exemplifies the richness of a culture and energizes our thought processes. We are exposed to art, design, and creativity all day long, whether we realize it or not.



Figure 12.2. *The Water Lily Pond* by Claude Monet hangs in the Albertina, a museum in Vienna, Austria, but reproductions of Monet's art can be found everywhere. "Water Lily Pond" by Claude Monet. Public domain.

Art is one way in which people share ideas, express themselves, and communicate. How and where an individual is able to access art is largely related to the values and beliefs a culture holds as a standard for determining what is desirable in a society, both by artistic and beauty standards.

Individuals have specific, individualized beliefs but can still share collective values. Values shape how a society views what is considered beautiful and what kinds of art are valued. Beauty is a concept that is flexible and that changes depending on where and when you are living. A family's access to art that speaks to their culture, interests, and imagination depends on what is available in the popular media and accessible in their geographic region. In Western culture, art was historically housed in museums. In Indigenous cultures, art often takes the form of useful objects, such as baskets, an example shown in figure 12.3,

and clothing.



Figure 12.3. In the Western Apache culture, women traditionally produced storage baskets for family use. This basket, likely made in Arizona circa 1890, is now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. "Storage Basket (Apache), ca. 1890" from the Charles and Valerie Diker Collection of Native American Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Public domain.

Today, art and other imagery are easily accessible through digitized forms of technology, which are accessed through the internet. These readily available ways that people can use and access visual culture can breed unrealistic expectations for many people.

For example, with the rise of "selfies," social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat can provide individuals with outlets to shape and shift self-images so that they can conform more easily to the dominant social standard of beauty.

It can be posited then that the dominant culture's expectation of physical beauty can and has been what has most heavily influenced Western culture. The media and films portray a particular standard of beauty, setting up a tension between conforming to this standard, individualistic preferences, and cultural practices that may conflict with the idealized concept of beauty.

Beauty perceptions affect family members of all ages; the multidirectional relationship between families and society affects the parents and guardians of children, which in turn affects the kids, the grandkids, and so on. The patterns are shown in the ways we raise our children, which is the emotional connection within the private family.

Art: A Historical Context

Expression is a fundamental need for human beings. Some human developmental theories, like Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, demonstrate that once humans have their basic needs met, such as food, water, shelter, love, nurturance, and housing, they can begin to move into more creative avenues of self-expression and self-actualization.

Throughout history, humans have produced artworks. One would be surprised at how far back in time humans were attempting to engage in expression. Scientists have recently found shells dating back 500,000 years ago that were engraved with small geometric incisions on the surface (Callaway, 2014). While these shells can be debated to be considered art by historians, it's important to note that long before the concept of "art" was created, homo sapiens were trying to do it (figure 12.4).

The question "What is art?" is one that continues to be debated. Some art historians believe that the oldest piece of art to date has been discovered and originated from the Late Stone Age and the Upper Paleolithic Period, from between 70,000 and 40,000 BCE.

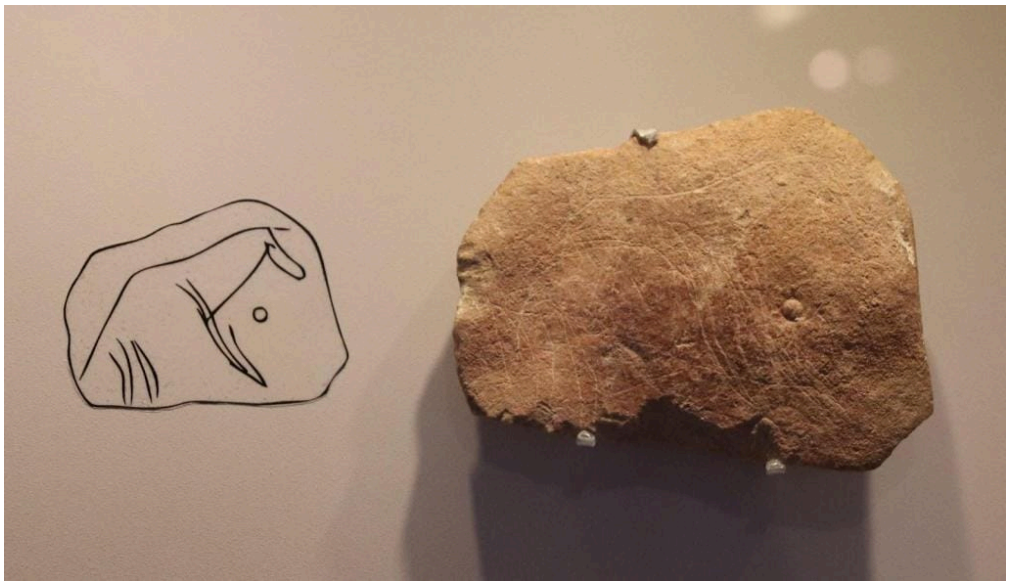


Figure 12.4. This prehistoric art carving was made circa 26,000 BCE. “Stone Age Animal Carving, Hayonim Cave, 28000 BP” by Gary Todd (photographer). License: CC0 1.0.

Throughout history, art has been passed down from our families through rituals and ceremonies that are given to us by our communities and interactions with the dominant culture (Breen, 2008). Do human beings have equitable access to create art now? Are there barriers present in the lives of individuals today that make it difficult or impossible to engage in self-expression? Systemic barriers that limit families in the United States from meeting basic needs also inhibit equitable access to self-expression.

Using Art to Teach

Visual representations are strong; the popular saying, “A picture is worth 1,000 words,” speaks to this power. When it comes to teaching history in the high school setting, it has been found that art is a powerful pedagogy that moves students beyond the understanding that they gain from text alone. Students develop more interest in history, and the potential for examining multiple viewpoints via artistic representation can help students to develop critical thinking skills related to understanding history.

Younghee Suh summarizes much of the literature related to how students absorb history via **artistic representations** (visual, photographic, and musical, among others) in the study “Past Looking: Using Arts as Historical Evidence in Teaching History” (Suh, 2013). Suh focuses on pedagogy and notes that the way in which teachers expose students to art highly influences students’ abilities to sort fiction from fact. However, exposure to art from the past is not enough. Teachers must also provide scaffolding to students that helps them to consider the perspective of the artist, the time in history, and the choice about which art is included in textbooks and other historical summaries. Without this guidance and contextualization, learners are left to see representations as “fact” instead of a particular viewpoint of the past.

Many history books (and the accompanying artistic representations) are presented from the viewpoint of the Euro-American settlers. It is important that we understand the experience of all families, not just the families who belong to the culture that now dominates. In the process of establishing dominance, Indigenous families were harmed. For example, children were frequently separated from the rest of the family and sent to schools where they were harshly punished for speaking their native languages and practicing their religions (Little, 2018). Violence against Indigenous women was and is still perpetuated at higher rates than against women of other races and is underreported and under-prosecuted (Amnesty International, n.d.).

Another example of the cultural context of art comes from Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon. A student made this observation in an art history class: “I took an art class, and when my teacher was showing a painting of the Virgin Mary it seemed very normal to everyone in my class except for me until she showed a picture of the Virgin Mary the way that Latinos are used to seeing her (the one on the left in figure 12.5 is a Mexican depiction of Virgin Mary and the one on the right is Italian). If my teacher would have never said that it was Virgin Mary who was depicted in the art, I would’ve never known because that’s not how I have seen Virgin Mary growing up.”



Figure 12.5. Here are two artistic representations of the Virgin Mary. On the left is part of a 16th-century shrine located at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, Mexico. On the right is the *Madonna del Granduca* by Raphael (1505), which hangs in the Pitti Palace in Florence, Italy. "Virgen de Guadalupe." Public domain. "Madonna del Granduca" by Raphael. Public domain.

The Virgin Mary is associated with qualities considered positive in Western culture, which include purity and beauty. Look closely at these images in figure 12.5 to see how the expression of those characteristics are represented.

A discussion of art needs greater exploration and explanation, but the point of this section is to illustrate the ways in which art always has a viewpoint. While the dominant cultural viewpoint is the one most often seen, art can also be used to express other viewpoints and to initiate critical discussion about the past, as we will explore in the next section.

Comprehension Self Check

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12.3: Cultural Exposure Can Be Unintentional

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Christopher Byers

Families have unequal access to viewing and experiencing visual culture. Geographical location, socioeconomic status, and social characteristics all influence access to art. In particular, families in rural areas, with lower socioeconomic status, and in minoritized groups have less opportunity to accrue wealth in the United States and have fewer opportunities. In addition, they are less likely to have influence in terms of what is considered worthy to appear in curated exhibits behind museum doors.

Curated Art

One way to measure equity in art is to examine the ability to view curated art. Access to art in childhood is especially important because activating the developing child and adolescent brain impacts eventual life outcomes. In 2011, a unique opportunity presented itself to study how child access to art affected adult outcomes. Alice Walton, a Walmart heir, founded the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, a 50,000-square-foot space with an $800 million endowment, in Bentonville, Arkansas (figure 12.6). Most children in this area had little or no exposure to art or other cultural experiences.

Class visits were provided for free via the gift of a donor. Demand was high, and not all groups who desired the visits could be accommodated. Scholars from the University of Arkansas set up a lottery system to determine which school groups would visit the museum. During the following months, all students (those who visited and those who did not) were offered free tickets to visit the museum with their families, and they were also administered a multidimensional survey. Nearly 11,000 students and 500 teachers participated in this study (Green et al., 2013).



Figure 12.6 Visits to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art were made available to all children and their families, with only some children visiting with their school classmates. This was part of a rigorous study that showed art access as a part of schooling is important. "Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas USA, Architect Moshe Safdie, Photo of One of Three Bridge Pavilions" by Charvex. License: CC0 1.0.

Students who visited the museum with their classmates demonstrated stronger critical thinking skills, displayed higher levels of social tolerance, exhibited greater historical empathy, and developed a taste for art museums and cultural institutions (Kisida et al., 2013). In addition, students who had visited the museum with their class groups were 18% more likely to use the coupon to visit the museum with their families! Importantly, this effect was stronger for minority students, rural students, and low-income students than it was for White, middle-class, suburban students. While there are additional questions to be answered, this study demonstrates the importance of exposure and access to art and cultural experiences for all children. The study indicates that arts education inclusion in school curricula will help students develop critical thinking, an understanding of diverse ideas and experiences, and empathy with those who are different from themselves. Read the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art here,

if you are interested in exploring this museum more.

Protest Art

Visual art as **protest art** is used both to promote and to express dissatisfaction with ideologies, policies, and social movements. Creative expression is used to express individual and group views, thoughts, and emotions. Because making art isn't always an expensive venture, many can participate in it. Displays of art are not limited to inside the doors of a museum with admission fees. Anyone can access it while out and about in their daily lives; it is everywhere.

This brings us to the notion of power. When people express their thoughts and feelings via paper, canvas, media, or other outlets, it can have a powerful effect on an audience. Art that is expressed publicly is more equitably available to people in minoritized groups and with fewer socioeconomic resources.



Figure 12.7. This street art in Berlin, Germany, shows a portrait of George Floyd. "Mural Portrait of George Floyd by Eme Street Art in Mauerpark (Berlin, Germany)" by Singlespeedfahrer (photographer). License: CC0.

Figure 12.7 is a visual reminder of the number of Black men and women who have been killed by police when in helpless circumstances. The protest is not only about George Floyd's murder but also about the overall dominant culture of the police force in the United States.

Privileged groups who have a higher distribution of resources, such as wealth, may present their views via protest but also have the means to use art to catch people's attention and promote their agendas via advertising, media, and political campaigns.

Art has a special place among activists and social movements because it can be used as a message to pay attention to a particular issue or injustice (figure 12.8). It exists in part to freely express oneself, gain attention, plant a seed, or inspire passion to actively do something about the issue.



Figure 12.8. Gay pride parade marchers often hold signs. Photograph by Pxfuel. License: Pxfuel License.

Both protest and artistic expression are fundamental rights protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. The melding of the two creates messages that can influence and empower individuals and families. Activist artistic expression that argues for the needs of the underserved occurs around the world and does not fit into any one box.

Public Art

Much of this chapter discusses art that has some kind of paywall: museums with entrance fees or films and other media that require a ticket or subscription price. In this section, we will pay attention to art that may be considered "public" in one form or another. **Public art** can be created in any type of material with the form, function, and meaning intended for the general public, often through a public process. While it is also often described as representing universal concepts rather than those that are partisan, political, commercial, or personal, these authors challenge that notion from two perspectives. The first is that the funding for and decision-making about public art is still often controlled by dominant or political groups. While efforts have been made to equalize art-making decisions, the tension between money and ideals is real. Secondly, it can be said that all art is personal. What is more personal than an artist's vision and creation? Some public art is commissioned by a public group, and this can come with restrictions or guidance for the artists. For now, we will stick with the definition that public art is art that is easily accessed by any member of society.

By its nature, public art may be viewed by anyone who can get themselves to the location it is presented. While it is more equitably accessible than art housed in museums, galleries, and media conglomerates, it is important to note that transportation, location, and resources (both time and money) prevent many families from accessing public art.

Creating and maintaining public art presents unique challenges to equity. Some citizens may hold art that is viewed or funded by the public to a different standard—one that emphasizes societal norms. Others may argue that some subjects are inappropriate to display publicly, in particular if children or young adults could view the display.

In Focus: Linn-Benton Community College and "Drawing the Line"

The tensions that can exist around public art displays were demonstrated during the 2017 exhibit "Drawing the Line" in the hallways of North Santiam Hall at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC). Curated by LBCC art faculty and students, the fiber art of Andrew Douglas Campbell lined the halls through which the LBCC community traversed to class, the lunch commons, and offices (figures 12.9 and 12.10). Generally, Campbell explores themes of difference, connection, and identity in his work. He is an artist who merges the mediums of photography and fiber to focus on the response and interaction of social and narrative tensions. To read more from Campbell, view his website here.



Figure 12.9 LBCC's campus featured works by Andrew Douglas Campbell, such as *Rend and Mend*, pictured here. "Rend and Mend" © Andrew Douglas Campbell. All rights reserved. Used with permission.



Figure 12.10. LBCC's campus featured works by Andrew Douglas Campbell, such as *Thresh(strand)hold*, pictured here. "Thresh(strand)hold" © Andrew Douglas Campbell. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

The public art display at LBCC explored multiple subjects, but attention rapidly became focused on one series that examined the relationship of the porn industry and its marketing strategies to the queer community, titled *...And Then What Could Happen Bent to What Will Happen...* and shown in figure 12.11.

Campbell describes his process: "[I was] thinking about the porn industry as a market that I personally had not yet held with the same skeptical eye as I do a lot of other economies, and so I started to look at that and part of it is true, they have tapped into a certain desire of mine. Part of it is I'm very skeptical of it," said Campbell. "It made sense to me that I should render their material sort of inconsequential; it's so fragile it can be blown away. It's important but unimportant at the same time, it's present and not present, it's solid and transparent. That's where I came up with these very loose airy images that are barely there but still very impactful" (Guy, 2017).



Figure 12.11. The work pictured here, *...And Then What Will Happen Bent to What Could Happen...* by Andrew Douglas Campbell, was particularly controversial when it was displayed on LBCC's campus. "...And Then What Will Happen Bent to What Could Happen..." © Andrew Douglas Campbell. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

The focus became negative; a local company that pays their employees' tuition at LBCC and a member of the board of directors of the college were most outspoken in their belief that this work should not be displayed in a setting that was publicly accessible. There were discussions about this display at every level of the college: in offices, classrooms, and boardrooms. Ultimately, there were some alterations and adaptations to the exhibit, and it remained in place.

When considering the diverse structure and viewpoints of families in the United States, it is important to think about whether all families have access to viewing art that speaks to them, represents them, and inspires them. Limiting art to the viewpoint of any dominant group limits the expression and growth of families. "Drawing the Line" is the catalyst for related questions: Would similar artwork that expressed heteronormative experiences have invited the same controversy? And why is sexuality considered an offensive or inappropriate subject for public artistic display while scenes of conquerors, violence, and dominance are prominently exhibited? Examples of and responses to the latter will be discussed in this chapter.

In 2020, another example of public art that led to controversy among stakeholders occurred during a clash at Bellevue College in Seattle, Washington, which counted more than one-fifth of their students and employees as Asian and Pacific Islanders at the time. A mural commissioned to illustrate the unjustness of the imprisonment of Japanese American citizens during World War II (figure 12.12) was brought to campus to recognize the Day of Remembrance, which recognizes the day that President Franklin Roosevelt signed an executive order that authorized the incarceration.



Figure 12.12. This public art at Bellevue College by Seattle artist Erin Shigaki included an 11-foot-tall mural of two children photographed at a California incarceration camp, along with a large statement, "Never Again Is Now," and a smaller artist's statement titled "Day of Remembrance." "Erin Shigaki's statement about her installation at Bellevue College is shown after a sentence was removed that references anti-Japanese views held by Miller Freeman and other Eastside businessmen in the decades leading up to..." by Leslie Lum, *The Seattle Times*. All rights reserved. License: Fair Use.

The artist's statement revealed factual information that has been documented in newspaper archives and history books about local leader Miller Freeman's anti-Japanese statements and actions that contributed to the efforts to imprison these citizens. His descendants, who own extensive amounts of property and businesses in the local area, objected to the statement (Cornwell, 2020). Several administrative leaders bowed to pressure to alter the artist's statement on a public mural (figure 12.13). This is a literal example of whitewashing history, as Wite-Out was used to eliminate the racially/ethnically biased actions of a White businessman.

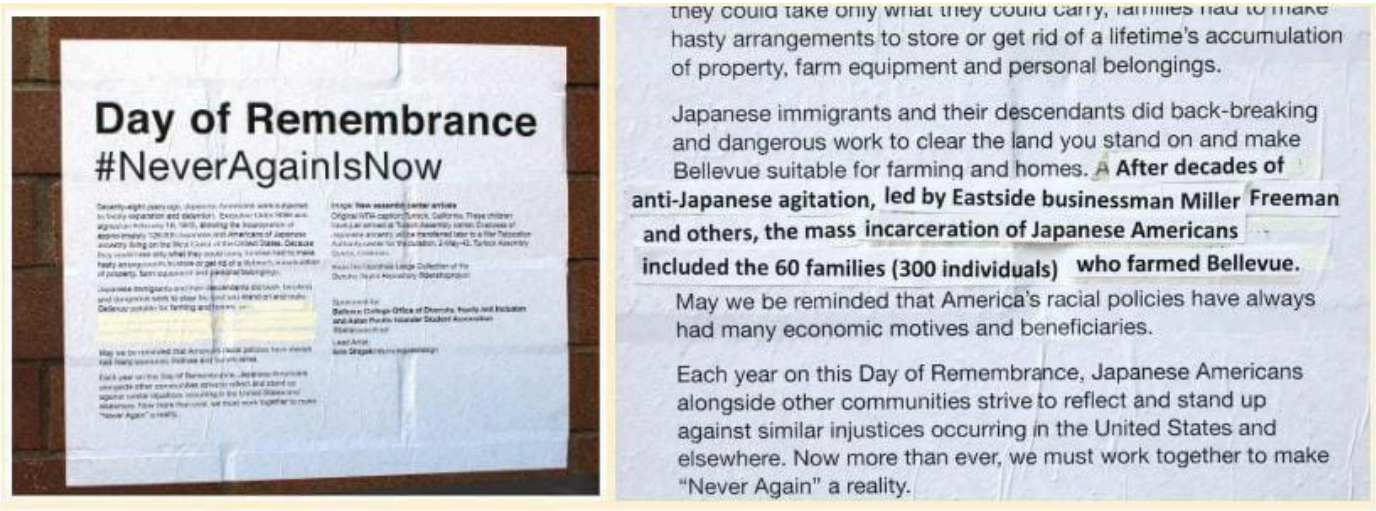


Figure 12.13. These images show us a concrete example of "whitewashing" (A) and then the pasted-over corrections from the original artist's statement (B). "The sentence removed from Erin Shigaki's statement accompanying her art installation at Bellevue College has now been replaced" by Greg Gilbert, *The Seattle Times*. All rights reserved. License: Fair Use.

Later, the whited-out section was replaced with the original words. Ultimately, the administrator who made the decision to white out the words was fired, as was the college president. Artist Erin Shigaki, whose father was born in a Japanese internment camp, wrote to *The Seattle Times* in response to the covering up of her words, "I had the feelings associated with both sides of my family being forcibly removed from Seattle—erased, unimportant, disregarded, disrespected, shamed" (Cornwell, 2020).

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=985#h5p-50

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12.4: Historical Impact on Today's Families

Elizabeth B. Pearce; Hannah Morelos; and Jessica N. Hampton

Art has been a part of history and daily lives for centuries, but what is considered "artistic" and valuable as defined by financial worth has been shaped by the same preferences and oppression that shape other aspects of our daily lives. Many individuals face discrimination and underrepresentation based on their gender, race, sexuality, or other social characteristics. Even in the 20th century, we see the perceived differences between men's and women's art in the way that artists are often described in the media. Why is a woman referred to as a "female artist"? A person of color as a "Black photographer"? Or a "Latinx sculptor"? In contrast, when created by a White man, race and gender are not usually mentioned.

The topic of **Whiteness** as the dominant culture can be an uncomfortable topic for some while seeming quite obvious to others. Dominant culture expresses itself in the United States as the "typical" or "regular" way of being. Sometimes, White people express that they don't actually have a culture. This is part of the Whiteness experience. When we describe this experience, it includes the power given to a particular group of people and the oppression of another group of people, otherwise known as White privilege. "Whitewashed art" can be described as giving privilege to a group of people based on their social characteristics and perpetuating a system that favors Euro-Americans.

When we talk about Whiteness in art, it allows us the opportunity to peel back a layer of denial. Western expansion and dominance of Indigenous communities is one reason that there is a preference for White and Westernized art and institutions. It is interesting to note that implicit bias, "the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our actions that we aren't aware of, can affect how and what we feel and think about the word art when we hear it" (The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2015).

What do you think of when you think of art? An example of implicit bias would be when an implicit bias and cultural norms shape how we respond to art. Individuals from any culture are more likely to view a work of art as pleasing if it fits with their culture's dominant social characteristics. For example, one of the most famous sculptures in the world, The David by Michelangelo Buonarroti, shows a young White male, which is a dominant characteristic of Western culture. Traditionally, art that represents Western culture has been made, exhibited, and celebrated by White men. This bias affects who is considered an artist and what is considered art. A recent study found that 85% of artists featured in permanent collections are White, while 87% are men (Magazine & Solly, 2019). Our exposure to these institutionalized biases as children can affect how we view art.

Social institutions are complex systems that both influence their members and can be influenced by individuals as well. For example, schools and museums are both examples of institutions in which children and families participate. They are exposed to art that is, for the most part, White and male-dominated through the selection process that has occurred throughout history. Increasing awareness of these biases has led to exhibitions and mentorship of individuals in underrepresented groups related to gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, ability, and other social characteristics. Individuals and allies contribute to institutions by advocating for change. Examples within this chapter show both the built-in biases and the ways in which artistic expression helps us move beyond socially constructed bias, preference, and ideas; this expands our definitions of art and beauty.

Art, Race, and Ethnicity

Ken Monkman is a North American artist well known for his paintings that reexamine the past. He frames his work by noting that these past experiences significantly influence the present. Monkman describes his use of visual art to examine the experience of Indigenous people in North America, both during the period of colonization and the effects on present-day families. His paintings depict the violence that European settlers acted upon Indigenous people and the cultural beliefs that have been silenced. He creates works of art that tell the story from the perspective of those who were harmed and emphasizes the heroism of Indigenous families, the nonbinary aspect of gender they expressed, and other cultural aspects.

In the video in figure 12.14, Monkman describes his use of visual art to examine the experience of Indigenous people in North America, both during the period of colonization and the continued effects on present-day families.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 12.14. Shame and Prejudice: Artist Kent Monkman's Story of Resilience [YouTube Video]. Ken Monkman describes his critical perspective on art and its role in taking us to dark places. Transcript. "Shame and Prejudice: Artist Kent Monkman's Story of Resilience" © University of Toronto. License: Standard YouTube License.

Kehinde Wiley is another artist known for using his work to expose hypocrisies in the framing of European history, such as the Age of Reason, or Enlightenment period, which is known for its progress in liberty, universalism, separation of church and state, and freedom. This same time period is known for the colonialism of many Indigenous people and people of color (POC), including Napoleon Bonaparte himself, who reinstituted slavery in the French colonies a year after the famous Jacques-Louis David portrait *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* was painted.



Figure 12.15. Compare Kehinde Wiley's *Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps* (left) and Jacques-Louis David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (right). "Napoleon Crossing the Alps" by Jacques-Louis David. Public domain. "Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps" by Kehinde Wiley. License: Fair Use.

Wiley's reinterpretation of this painting, *Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps*, pictures a young Black man in the same pose (figure 12.15) but in a way that questions the heroism and softens the military masculinity portrayed in the original. He confronts and critiques the portrayal of Black people in art.

The paintings hung side-by-side in the Brooklyn Museum through March 2020.

Art, Sex, and Gender

Art, which is reflective of society, has been dominated by men. Men's work was more likely to be sponsored, commissioned, featured, publicized, and preserved. Women artists have often been seen as secondary. The artist Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter who was inspired by artifacts of her culture and used a folk art style (figure 12.16). She explored themes of identity, postcolonialism, class, race, and gender. A prime example of marginalization taking place in Frida Kahlo's lifetime happened when she lived in Detroit, married to a male artist named Diego Rivera. In Detroit, Frida Kahlo never showed her portraits in any exhibitions; however, she did get the opportunity to be interviewed. Although she was praised for her work through this

opportunity, when the article came out, it was titled “Wife of the Master Mural Painter Gleefully Dabbles in Works of Art.”



Figure 12.16. *Los Cocos* by Frida Kahlo (left) and *Poster – Frida Kahlo* by Vagner Borges (right) show an example of Kahlo’s work and of the way she is viewed iconically by others. “Coconuts” by Frida Kahlo. License: Fair Use. “Poster – Frida Kahlo” by Vagner Borges. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Through this lens, Frida Kahlo was publicly known to her peers and the world as “Diego Rivera’s wife” and not as an artist. But Kahlo’s work surpassed Rivera’s in terms of artistic and social recognition. Kahlo died in 1954 at age 47, and her work became best known between the 1970s and 1990s. She is regarded as an icon of the Chicano civil rights movement, feminism, and the LGBTQIA+ community, as represented by the right-hand image in 12.16.

Many paintings considered classic representations of ancient myths and events were painted by men. Carmen McCormack, a 2019 graduate of Oregon State University’s Bachelor of Fine Arts program, has recreated some works from a female, feminist, and lesbian perspective. For example, she has reinterpreted François Boucher’s 1741 painting, *Leda and the Swan*, which tells the story of the seduction or rape of Leda by the god Zeus in the form of a swan (figure 12.17).



Figure 12.17. Compare François Boucher’s *Leda and the Swan* (A, left) and Carmen McCormack’s take on the theme (B, right). “Leda and the Swan” by François Boucher. Public domain. “Leda and the Swan” by Carmen McCormack. License: Fair Use.

“I wanted to reinterpret that as a feminist, as a woman, and as a contemporary painter,” McCormack said in an interview with the *Corvallis Gazette-Times*. “In the original (the women) were smiling, which is interesting for a male painter because it reinterprets the story of sexual violence—it’s not a happy thing.” McCormack’s version shows a dark, stormy background, and the women’s facial expressions and body language suggest more fear and resistance than the original.

Centuries ago, genders were oppressed and underrepresented in their creative aspects. We can acknowledge that although there has been an improvement, there are still groups, genders, and individuals who face underrepresentation, discrimination, and oppression. New York is known as the hub of art, and yet it is estimated that 76% to 96% of the art showcased in art galleries is done by male artists. We can see that to this day, there is a gender gap in the art industry that continues into the 21st century.

Representation of People of Color

How are POC represented in visual mediums? And which POC are prominent? Notice that when leading roles are cast in visual mediums, they are often people of lighter-colored skin. This is called **colorism** and is distinct from racism in that it shows a preference for the visual look, as opposed to implying that there is inferiority based on race (Farrow, 2019). A recent example is the prominence of Jennifer Lopez (J-Lo) and Shakira in the 2020 Super Bowl halftime show. While both women are Latina, some POC do not feel represented by lighter-skinned people who have dyed their hair blonde.

Understanding "Isms"

Another way that film can help us to understand the world is to view how the oppression of **"ism"** affects a group that we are not a part of, such as understanding how women experience sexism, or Black people experience racism. But how do we identify which movies can help us understand what the actual experience is for the individual, and what "isms" feel like?

One of the best ways is to listen to a member of the group that experiences it. Podcasts, such as the *1A Movie Club*'s episode "*The Help* Doesn't Help" in June 2020, can help to explain how White-centered stories about racism fail to expose the actual experience of discrimination and to teach realistically and deeply. "White-centered" refers to stories that are told primarily from the White person's point of view, with a lead or leads who are White, and sometimes feature what is called the "White savior," meaning that it takes someone who is White to solve the problem, save the day, or otherwise fix some aspect of racism. Instead, the podcast hosts and guests recommend the following movies made by black artists, as pictured in figure 12.18, among others:

- *13th* (2016)
- *BlacKkKlansman*(2018)
- *Get Out* (2017)
- *I Am Not Your Negro* (2016)
- *Just Mercy* (2019)
- *When They See Us* (2019)



Figure 12.18. Black directors and actors, such as those who worked on the film *BlacKkKlansman*, are less likely to present a "White savior" story. "Adam Driver, John David Washington, and Director Spike Lee at the 2019 Critics' Choice Awards" by Chris Miksanek. License: CC BY-SA 4.0.

If you'd like to make stronger connections between movies and the ways that they affect families, listen here to the *1A Movie*

Club's lively discussion and debate about movies, Rotten Tomatoes, and other movie rating systems, racism, health care, the racial empathy gap, history, and current events.

Employment

While our discussion has focused on representation and on the effects that lack of representation has on families, it is important to mention employment. An obvious outcome of fewer POC or other minoritized groups in media is that people in these groups have fewer employment opportunities. A person who has multiple, intersectional characteristics has even fewer options. In the video in figure 12.19, actor Rosie Perez talks about how the intersection of gender, ethnicity, weight, attractiveness, and age affects her employment. Because movies influence so many consumers, the effects on Perez also indirectly affect the individuals and families who view media.

She conveys the message that while what is deemed "less desirable" by society may be acceptable for White males, it is less acceptable to have these traits as a woman of color. Note that her language may be triggering to some readers.

YouTube Video

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Figure 12.19. Rosie Perez on Roles for Women of Color [YouTube Video]. Perez takes a blunt approach in her description of social characteristics, especially related to age and body size. Transcript. "Rosie Perez on Roles for Women of Color" © PBS. License: Standard YouTube License.

The video in figure 12.20 from the YouTube channel Film Courage contains similar descriptions from actors and actresses of color.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

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Figure 12.20. Does Ethnicity Prevent Actors From Booking Work? [YouTube Video]. These actors describe not just the lack of quantity of roles but also the limitations in the kinds of characters made available for them to play. Transcript. "Does Ethnicity Prevent Actors from Booking Work?" © Film Courage. License: Standard YouTube License.

These descriptions by Rosie Perez and other actors are supported by research. Family films made between 2006 and 2009 in the United States and Canada were studied specifically for gender bias but also included appearance and age in the assessment. Twelve to fourteen percent of women with unrealistic body types, exposed skin, and waists so tiny that they would leave "little room for a womb or any other internal organs" are featured in these films. In addition, it is most common for women to be under the age of 39 years (about 74%), with a higher percentage of men over the age of 40 years (Smith & Choueiti, n.d.).

Comprehension Self Check

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12.5: Television, Film, and Video Games

Elizabeth B. Pearce; Emily Miller; Jessica N. Hampton; Hannah Morelos; and Katie Niemeyer

Take a minute to think about how much media you are exposed to in one day—from watching television and movies and cruising the internet to reading newspapers, books, and magazines and listening to music or watching music videos. Does anyone in your family play video games? The majority of this media is produced by corporations and infused with advertisements.

Television

According to the Nielsen Company—a marketing corporation that collects statistics on media usage—report, the average American ages "18 to 34 spent two hours and 45 minutes daily watching live TV in the Fourth Quarter of 2015, and one hour and 23 minutes using TV-connected devices—a total of four hours and 8 minutes using a TV set for any purpose" (Nielsen Company, 2016). The pervasiveness of media in culture begs a number of questions: what are the effects of such an overwhelming amount of exposure to media that is often saturated with advertisements? How do media construct or perpetuate gendered, sexualized, classed, ableized, and racialized differences and inequalities? What is the relationship between media and consumers, and how do consumers interact with media?

Media expert and sociologist Michael Kimmel argues that the media are a primary institution of socialization that not only reflects but creates culture. Media representation is a key domain for identity formation and the creation of gendered and sexualized differences (Kimmel, 2003). For example, think back to Disney movies you were probably shown as a child. The plots of these movies typically feature a dominant young man—a prince, a colonial ship captain, a soldier—who is romantically interested in a young woman—both are always assumed to be heterosexual—who at first resists the advances of the young man, but eventually falls in love with him and marries him.

Disney movies teach children a great deal about gender and sexuality; specifically, they teach children to value hegemonic masculinity and emphasize femininity. **Hegemonic masculinity** refers to a specific type of culturally valued masculinity tied to marriage and heterosexuality and patriarchal authority in the family and workplace and maintains its privileged position through subordinating other less dominant forms of masculinity (i.e., dominance over men of lower socioeconomic classes or gay men). **Emphasized femininity**, meanwhile, refers to compliance with the normative ideal of femininity, as it is oriented to serving the interests of men (Connell, 1987).

What do Disney movies have to do with how people actually live their lives? It is *because* they are fictional, so pervasive in our culture, and shown to us at such a young age that they may shape our gendered and sexualized selves in ways that we do not even realize. How many times have you heard people say that they want a "fairy tale wedding" or heard the media refer to a celebrity wedding as a "fairy tale wedding?" This is one example of how the media reproduces dominant ideologies—the ideas, attitudes, and values of the dominant culture—about gender and sexuality.

Media also reproduce racialized and gendered normative standards in the form of **beauty ideals** for both women and men. As Jean Kilbourne's video series *Killing Us Softly* illustrates, representations of women in advertising, film, and magazines often rely on the **objectification** of women—cutting apart their bodies with the camera frame and recrafting their bodies through digital manipulation in order to create feminized bodies with characteristics that are largely unattainable by the majority of the population. Kilbourne shows how advertising often values the body types and features of White women—having petite figures and European facial features—while exoticizing women of color by putting them in nature scenes and animal-print clothing that are intended to recall a pre-civilizational past. The effect of this is to cast women of color as animalistic, savage creatures—a practice that has historically been used in political cartoons and depictions of POC to legitimize their subjugation as less than human.

In addition, the media depict the world from a masculine point of view, representing women as sex objects. This kind of framing, what Laura Mulvey called the **male gaze**, encourages male viewers to see women as objects and encourages women to see themselves as objects of men's desire; the male gaze is thus a heterosexual male gaze. These are just a couple of examples of how media simultaneously reflects and constructs differences in power between social groups in society by representing those groups.

Another way in which media reflect and simultaneously produce power differences between social groups is through symbolic annihilation. **Symbolic annihilation** refers to how social groups that lack power in society are rendered absent, condemned, or

trivialized through mass media representations that simultaneously reinforce dominant ideologies and the privilege of dominant groups. For example, as we argued earlier, gay, lesbian, transgender, and disabled characters in mass media are often few and far between, and when they are present, they are typically stereotyped and misrepresented.

While Kilbourne's insights illustrate how beauty ideals produce damaging effects on women and girls, her model of how consumers relate to media suggests that the consumers are passively accepting everything they see in advertising and electronic and print media. As Kimmel argues, "The question is...*how* the media and its consumers interact to create the varying meanings that derive from our interactions with those media" (Kimmel 2003: 238). No advertisement, movie, or any form of media has an inherent, intended meaning that passes directly from the producer of that media to the consumer of it, but consumers interact with, critique, and sometimes reject the intended messages of media. In this way, the meanings of media develop through the interaction between the media product and the consumers who are interacting with it.

Furthermore, media consumers can blur the distinction between producer and consumer by creating their own media in the form of videos, music, pamphlets, zines, and other creations. Therefore, while media certainly often reproduce dominant ideologies and normative standards, media consumers from different standpoints can and do modify and reject the intended meanings of media.

Film

Another visual medium, film, is a part of many families' daily lives. Mainstream movies are accessible to Americans via many formats. Although women and POC are represented in audiences in greater percentages than their population base, they are vastly underrepresented in lead roles both on and off-screen. In 2018, only one female, Greta Gerwig, and one person of color, Jordan Peele, were nominated for Best Director in the Oscars award show. In an analysis of speaking roles for women in the 900 most popular films from 2007 to 2016, fewer than one-third of the roles went to women. Representation is worse for nonbinary people, and when intersectionality of color and gender are examined (Tan, 2018).

When children watch a movie, they are exposed to a variety of people. What most of these actors and actresses have in common is that they are White. As of 2017, only 20% of all lead actors and actresses on screen were POC (Statista, 2020). To the children watching these movies, White people are the majority demographic being represented.

In one study, researchers found that when preschoolers were asked to draw a main character from a fairy tale, most of the students drew a figure with blonde hair and light skin. The findings imply that children, even those of color, saw that White skin meant a happy ending (Hurley, 2005). In their minds, only blond people with White skin were allowed to save the day and be stars.

When movies such as *Home*, *Black Panther*, or *Crazy Rich Asians* came out, POC flocked to see them. These movies lack obvious stereotypes, and POC play leading roles. Movies with successful POC are important because these movies challenge the idea that White culture is the norm. When movies feature POC, parents have the chance to show their children a main character with the same skin color or hair type as their own.

Representation in movies also pertains to how the characters are portrayed. Do they follow common, sometimes derogatory, stereotypes? Are they seen as the villain? Are they the first to be killed? When POC are being represented through stereotypes or **typecasting** (when a person is repeatedly cast for the same type of character, usually based on looks), it sheds a negative light on those people, even if the film has a more diverse cast.

In March 2020, *The Washington Post Magazine* featured a project in which actors of minoritized groups were asked what kind of roles they typically were cast in and what kind of roles they would like to play (Sakaguchi & San Martin, 2020). This powerful series emphasizes how easily stereotypes can be embedded in our minds. You can see Haruka Sakaguchi & Griselda San Martin's full photography series at the Typecast Project.

Typecasting people contributes to the reinforcement of stereotypes of POC and other minoritized groups; it emphasizes the centrality of White people both as the norm and as the keepers of interesting plot lines and life stories.

Video Games

Video games are a form of visual media used by families, and the representation shown in games can have an influence on those who play them. Teens are a big share of the market; 72% of teens play video games, with 84% of them being boys and 59% being girls (Anderson, n.d.) In addition, 83% of Black teens play video games, while White teens are at 71% and 69% of

Latine teens play. Despite Black teens being in the majority of those who play video games, they also tend to be one of the least represented in video games. The same could be said for Latine teens as well. Video games have a history of marginalized groups being portrayed poorly in games. Not all representation is good representation, so when there is a character from a marginalized group in a game, it doesn't mean they are being represented well. Many video games have had characters who are packed with offensive stereotypes and tropes, while women are sexualized (Leveling up representation: Depictions of POC in video games | pbs. n.d.) Having only this type of representation can be harmful, especially for children, who may play a game in an isolated space, as shown in figure 12.21.



Figure 12.21. Children, teenagers, and adults all play video games. Sometimes, people may play video games together in person or online, but they also play alone. "Man in black shirt using computer" by Ralston Smith on Unsplash. License: Unsplash License.

Dr. Katryna Starks, a media psychologist and game design teacher, notes how characters in video games can have an impact on gamers' social cognition and strengthen your feeling of social support and identity. When these characters are being represented negatively, it can cause lots of harm for both people within marginalized groups and for society in general. As Dr. Starks says, "Black kids aren't seeing themselves as the heroes. They don't see themselves solving problems and wearing capes. We deserve to feel that these gaming worlds were made for us to be in, too, and that we belong there." Characters in games can help shape your identity, so seeing people like you be represented poorly or just not represented at all can really cause damage to how you view yourself (Shliakhovchuk & Muñoz, 2020). Video games full of stereotypes and biases have the power to change or reinforce a player's worldview. This causes implicit bias—a bias that occurs unconsciously. This is why it is so important for gamers to critically evaluate the games they play and the influence it has on them.

Another issue when it comes to representation in video games is the lack of customization options for characters in games. Many games give you the option to design your own character but include very few options for designing POC. Sometimes they do have Black hairstyles, but they aren't designed in a very accurate way. Many gamers even create their own hairstyles. For example, the modding community for *The Sims* is huge and is one of the only places gamers can find hairstyles and skin tones that are more accurate to POC.

So why is good representation lacking in video games? One of the main reasons is the people working on these games. There are 428,000 jobs in the video game industry nationwide. However, only 2% of the professionals in this industry are Black (Toulon). Latoya Peterson, co-founder of Glow Up Games based in Brooklyn, New York, knows firsthand the type of barriers Black-owned startups face in the video game industry. When pitching to investors for funding for her game about the award-winning show *Insecure*, being developed by a women-led team, she had no success. Despite being backed by HBO, they were still being told, "We don't think we can help you." Mentors, family, and friends did end up stepping up for them, along with Techstars, a program that accelerates startups, the game was made, as shown in figure 12.22.



Figure 12.22. This poster advertises a video game based on the television show *Insecure*. "Insecure: The Come Up Game" by Owen Bell. License: Fair Use.

While there is still work to be done, there have been some recent developments that provide hope that representation is getting better in video games. For example, the *Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales* game developed by Insomniac games, and Nixxes Software made for PlayStation was praised for its representation. In this game, you play as Miles Morales, a biracial Black and Puerto Rican teenager, on his journey to becoming Spider-Man and a hero. Jorge Castro, a YouTube gamer, cried as he watched the trailer for this game, saying, "It's awesome to see my heritage, part of my heritage, being on display with a character that I love."

Transgender and nonbinary people have found gaming to be an exploratory space for identity, first by taking on a different identity than assigned at birth while in the gaming world. However, more recent developments in gaming give players more freedom to choose their pronouns, shape their bodies, and select vocal ranges. Visual avatars are more unique and representative of diverse identities. Interviews with more than a dozen nonbinary and transgender gamers revealed that the wide range of tools that can be used to create a character's appearance, as well as a virtual reality that accepts those changes, makes gaming a safe solace to explore queer identities (Small, 2023).

The good news is that there are more choices that better represent the social identities of all groups. Parents can be involved in making the choices for the games their children play. Trends show that more parents are previewing video games before they are purchased. In fact, 78% of parents say that they make all or most of the decisions, and 17% say that they decide on the games with their children (Vance, 2022). If you were a parent, what would you do? Would it be different depending on your child's age? Consider how discussing this with your children might build skills and knowledge about evaluating games from various lenses.

If you would like to explore the topic of representation in media more deeply, check out the Representation and Humanization video and activity, which focuses on the representation of transgender people in television, film, and other media in the "Going Deeper" section.

Comprehension Self Check

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12.6: Beauty, Identity, and Academics

Wesley Sharp and Elizabeth B. Pearce

Although the famous saying “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” originated in the third century BCE and was revived in its current form by Margaret Wolfe Hungerford in 1878, it can also be said that society, and the media in particular, create and reinforce stereotypical ideas of beauty.

Beauty is a social construct. It is based on societally agreed-upon ideas that have been ingrained into our systems and our psyches over time and have been accepted as the norm. These ideas of beauty slowly become embedded into our minds on a micro-level and affect the way we operate. There is a multidirectional relationship with societal forces, including media, marketing, businesses, government, and other institutions. These forces influence youth, affecting appearance, cosmetics, behavior, and clothing. While there were 50 media conglomerates (groups that control the media) in the United States in 1984, by 2011, 90% of media was controlled by six media conglomerates that are owned by predominantly White and wealthy males (Lutz, 2012). These media companies responsible for creating and reinforcing preferences and biases that reinforce the dominant culture’s idea of beauty.

Western society has identified particular aspects of physical appearance as being beautiful or desirable. People with these characteristics are favored and featured. This is known as the halo effect, in which additional favorable characteristics are associated with “attractiveness.” One example of this effect applies to academia. Using just the faces of university students, researchers learned that subjects inaccurately attributed competence and intelligence to more attractive faces (Talamas et al., 2016). This can have long-term implications for success in education, as other research has found that teachers’ expectations of learners can have a positive or negative effect on their learning (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

Another example from academia describes how gender, perceived attractiveness, and age intersect to affect how students’ perception of physical appearance moderate their experience of the actual behavior of faculty. When students rated the perceived qualities of instructors based on appearance in a 2014 study, women’s age and attractiveness were linked (older women were judged to be less attractive). Less attractiveness correlated with judgments students made about prospective faculty. Students judged less attractive (and older) faculty as less likely to be organized or have a rapport with their students, illustrating the halo effect (Wilson & Monteiro, 2014).

There have been some insightful analyses of attractiveness and facial symmetry related to pay and job attainment in sports. The most well-known analysis relates to “quarterback face.” Using computer measurements, economists found that while taking into account career statistics, experience, Pro Bowl appearances, and draft position, one standard deviation of symmetry of facial structure led to an 8% increase in pay (Berri, 2008). This holds true for starting quarterbacks in the National Football League (NFL) and even more strongly for backup quarterbacks.

Beauty can and does change from place to place, from culture to culture, and from person to person. It is demonstrated via society’s products, patterns, trends, wants, and desires. It is influenced biologically by pheromones and natural physical attractions. This shows us that it is a social construction. The threat to family well-being is when that socially constructed idea is assigned a different value or worth based on physical appearance. Bullying, fewer academic opportunities, and loss of employment can all be linked to the idealized conception of beauty. The halo effect can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy, where those who fit the social construction of attractiveness are perceived as being more valuable members of society, which then may lead to preferential treatment and more **life chances**, thereby increasing the person’s likelihood of succeeding (Barelds-Dijkstra & Barelds, 2008).

So what does this mean for us, the readers and writers of this text? It means that we need to be aware and pay attention to what we might call our “intuition” or “gut” feelings about who is deserving of the benefit of the doubt or of an extra opportunity. Sometimes, those instinctual feelings are masking some preference for attractiveness or an implicit bias. We can teach our children, students, peers, and colleagues the same. By making this topic discussable, we can work toward achieving equity in education, employment, and experience.

The dominant culture is powerful. Finding ways to fit in is important, and sometimes people go to extremes to fit into what is deemed desirable. For example, in the film *Crazy Rich Asians*, the movie rewards Rachel Chu for mimicking European beauty standards. She is preparing for a big wedding and has a friend who comments how they need to get her eyelids taped, which is a popular method for East Asian and Asian Americans to remove their monolids and appear more White. In this movie, Whiteness

is provided as the aesthetic for beauty standards, particularly Euro-American standards. The continual reinforcement of one kind of beauty creates tension and conflict for families between this ideal, their own culture, and individuality.



Figure 12.23 Several examples of body art, both permanent and temporary, are shown here. “Native American Dancer C” by alandberning. License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0. “Several Piercings” by Sara Marx. License: CC BY 2.0. “Celtic Cross” by scorpion1985x. License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0. “Face Painting” by clickclique. License: CC BY-NC 2.0

Art and beauty matter. Makeup and face paint can reflect one’s identity and culture but also idealized beauty standards (figure 12.23). In some Indigenous tribes, men use face paint to identify themselves, align with hopes and dreams, demonstrate their honor, and prepare for battle. Paints come from a variety of natural materials and hold significance related to color and pattern (Gowder, 2017). Drag families form by individuals serving in various familiar family roles, including a head parental figure. They use costumes and makeup to express identity, role, and representation (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2017). Tattoos and piercings have a long history of affiliation with beauty and expression and have only grown in recent decades in importance related to identity. Yet, there are questions and concerns related to employment when one has tattoos; bias against those with tattoos is a worry. The complexity of how each person and family member sees oneself, influenced by the societal norms that favor certain appearances, continues to affect the functionality of both families and society.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=991#h5p-53

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12.7: Looking Ahead- Lin-Manuel Miranda and Role Models

Diversity in culture can inspire people to express and reinforce their own identities whether or not they are in the dominant group. Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of the wildly popular Broadway musical and film *Hamilton: An American Musical*, talks about his love of theater as an adolescent but the limited view he had of his own expressive abilities until he saw *Rent*, the 1996 rock musical with music, lyrics, and book by Jonathan Larson. *Hamilton* premiered in 2015 and has won both critical and popular acclaim, including multiple Drama Desk and Tony awards, selling out performances on Broadway, and after three national tours, was ended only by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an interview with Terry Gross on NPR's *Fresh Air* in June 2020 (Miranda, 2020), Miranda said:

> Really, the only thing I saw that really gave me permission to write musicals was *Rent*, which was an incredibly diverse cast. And I went from being a fan of musicals to writing musicals when I saw that show because it was the thing that gave me permission...it was contemporary, and it had Latino actors and Black actors. And it told me you're allowed to write what you know into a show. No other musical had told me that....
>
> ...So it was truly the first contemporary musical I'd seen and, I think, got me from being a kid who was in school musicals and loved them but just thought they were written by other people, like, by, like, old White people on the Upper East Side, to giving me permission. And it's been gratifying to see how these shows, *Height*s and *Hamilton* in particular, like, not only provide employment but also provide, like, permission and amplification of a lot of other voices.

Miranda's statement demonstrates explicitly the importance of diverse voices being created, produced, and publicized. Identity and art are intertwined and influence individuals and families in their development, structure, and daily lives.

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12.8: Going Deeper

Now that you know more about how representation and belonging can affect families, this page has some resources for you.

First, there are some resources and an activity that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" and participate in an activity to go deeper.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- To read more about Andrew Douglas Campbell's art and the outcomes of the college-wide discussions and to view additional photographs, read this article from *The Commuter*, LBCC's student newspaper.
- Listen to the 46-minute podcast from the 1A Movie Club: Why 'The Help' Doesn't Help here or on any podcast feed. They talk about the difference between movies that present racism from the perspective of Black artists and authors as compared to those that focus on a White perspective and/or contain White Saviour themes.
- To explore representation in video games, click on Leveling up Representation: Depictions of People of Color in Video from Independent Lens.
- Listen to the NPR story "The Number of Black Video Game Developers Is Small, but Strong."

Activity: Representation and Humanization

Trans women characters are portrayed negatively in the media. Because most media is produced by cisgender heterosexual men, their assumptions and fears about trans women are often used as plot twists or objects of ridicule for comedic effect. For example, they are often represented as "actually men" who deceive men in order to "trap" them into having sex with them. These representations justify and normalize portrayals of disgust in response to trans women and violence against trans women, as shown in the video in figure 12.24. These kinds of depictions of trans women as "evil deceivers" and "pretenders" have been used in court cases to pardon perpetrators who have murdered trans women (Bettcher, 2007).

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 12.24. Depictions of Transgender "Deception" in Media [YouTube Video]. This video illustrates these concepts and emphasizes that merely "representing" people who are transgender on screen is not enough; in fact, it is harmful. More responsible media portrayals include transgender people as those who have agency over their own lives, are attractive, and are leading players rather than "objects." Transcript. "'It's a Trap!': Depictions of Trans Deception" © @rantasmo. License: Standard YouTube License.

Discussion Questions

1. What was new or surprising to you in this video?
2. How will this video affect the way you view the inclusion of people who are transgender in the media?
3. This video was made in 2008. Can you identify more recent examples of people who are transgender on television or film? In what way(s) does your newer example seem more humane? In what way(s) does your example reinforce negative stereotypes?
4. How does the concept of the "male gaze" relate to the ways that women who are transgender are portrayed?

Reflective Questions

1. What is the value of creativity, art, and beauty to American families?
2. How does art affect our understanding of American history?
3. What are the benefits and the challenges of unintended exposure to visual culture for individuals and families?
4. Choose one of the topics from this chapter (e.g., using art to teach, protest art, or television). For that topic, reflect on the role of the parent in helping children to understand and interpret what they see.
5. How does the dominant culture affect what is defined as "art"?
6. How do socially constructed ideas about beauty affect one's own identity and family experience?
7. What are the effects of intersectionality on potential creators, artists, and art lovers?

Key Terms

- **Artistic representation:** the use of a medium, such as clay or paint, to construct a representation of the real thing. Artistic representations are constructions of reality.
- **Beauty ideals:** a specific set of beauty standards regarding traits that are ingrained in women throughout their lives.
- **Colorism:** prejudice or discrimination that favors people with lighter skin over those with darker skin, especially within a racial or ethnic group.
- **Emphasized femininity:** a concept rooted in the patriarchy that women must conform to the needs and desires of men by compliance with the normative ideas of femininity.
- **Hegemonic masculinity:** a specific type of culturally valued masculinity tied to marriage, heterosexuality, and patriarchal authority that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women, nonbinary people, gay men, and other marginalized groups of men.
- **"Ism":** an oppressive and discriminatory attitude or belief.
- **Life chances:** a social science theory created by German sociologist Max Weber in 1920. The theory of life chances postulates that an individual's opportunity to lead a successful and fulfilling life are correlated to a variety of factors, including social stratification, social class, social mobility, and social equality, all of which can give a person low or high life chances.
- **Male gaze:** the idealized notion of a heterosexual man as the intended audience in a way that facilitates men objectifying or sexualizing women and women seeing themselves as objects of men's desire.
- **Objectification:** a social meaning imposed on one's being that defines them as an object or thing, typically within a sexual context.
- **Protest art:** a way of using creative work to communicate used by activists and social movements.
- **Public art:** art in any medium whose form, function, and meaning are created for the general public, often through a public process.
- **Symbolic annihilation:** a concept that refers to how marginalized groups of people are left absent, condemned, or trivialized through mass media representations, instead portraying oppressive ideologies created and enforced by dominant groups.
- **Typecasting:** the act of casting a person in a media role often based on physical appearance or stereotypes.
- **Visual culture:** combinations of visual events in which information, meaning, or pleasure are expressed tangibly or visibly.
- **Whiteness:** the quality of being light or White skinned in color and the normalization of White racial identity throughout history in the United States.

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CHAPTER 13: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the variability in equality and access to childcare and education.
2. Explain why the quality of childcare matters.
3. Explain the ways that access to college and college costs affect individuals, families, and the economy.
4. Describe the ways that generational inequities in education affect families.
5. Analyze the ways that gendered work expectations affect families.
6. Explain how parenting and care work interact with paid work.
7. Analyze childcare, education, employment, and workplace practices from an equity perspective.
8. Apply theoretical concepts related to education and employment to your own observations and experiences.

13.1: Chapter Reading Guide

13.2: Education and Employment Changes to Education- Birth through Adulthood

13.3: Post-Secondary Education and Families

13.4: Gender, Work, and Family

13.5: Care Work

13.6: Looking Ahead- Laborers Who Are Undocumented

13.7: Going Deeper

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13.1: Chapter Reading Guide

The authors hope that this chapter is especially relevant to you as a current student. Many college students have contributed to this text on topics such as childcare, federal financial aid, and military families. Choosing childcare and kindergarten through 12th grade (K–12), schools are decisions that almost every family will face. We also look at education and employment through an intersectional lens, a topic we first discussed in Chapter 1. We also take a close look at care work: the work that is done caring for family members and the home.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. Preview those to have an idea of where you are headed. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

With gratitude to the Linn-Benton Community College students in the "Contemporary Families in the U.S." class of spring 2023, who gave insightful feedback and suggestions to this chapter– Elizabeth B. Pearce

Key Terms Preview

- **Achievement gap:** significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students.
- **Care work:** the daily work that keeps a household running and the adults and children within it well cared for.
- **Childcare:** usually used to refer to non-parental care of a young child, often in a paid provider's home or in a childcare center.
- **Childcare trilemma:** the acknowledgment that it is difficult to provide affordable, accessible, and high-quality care without some kind of subsidy or support.
- **Educational debt:** the cumulative impact of fewer resources and other harm directed at students of color.
- **Emotional labor:** the regulation or hiding of emotions as a part of a work role.
- **Glass ceiling:** an artificial, unseen, and often unacknowledged discriminatory barrier that prevents otherwise qualified people such as women and minorities from rising to positions of leadership and power, particularly within a corporation.
- **Glass cliff:** purposeful promotion of women into positions with high risk for failure.
- **Glass escalator:** quick movement from entry-level to power-holding, higher-paying leadership jobs.
- **Kin-keeping:** effort to build and maintain relationships between family members.
- **Public school:** maintained through public funds to educate children living in that community or district without cost to families.
- **Student debt:** a loan taken to attend college that has not yet been repaid.
- **Voucher:** supplied by the government or other public entity for families to use to offset the cost of a private school.

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13.2: Education and Employment Changes to Education- Birth through Adulthood

It is difficult to imagine a more important, or at least as time-consuming, aspect of family life, than education and employment, in the United States. Education is compulsory for children in the United States, although federal, state, and local policies govern when that begins and when that ends. Kindergarten is mandatory in 17 states and the District of Columbia (Barrientos, 2023). The age that students may leave schooling varies between 14 and 18 years old. In addition, many children attend **childcare** for both full day and part-day settings (sometimes called "preschool") between birth and starting kindergarten or first grade. And college has become an increasingly important part of life in the United States. In this section we will use an equity lens to view what options and choices that families have and how their decisions impact generational outcomes.

Later in the chapter we will look at employment, or work, through an equity lens. Most importantly, we will examine all work, whether paid or unpaid. In 2022 individuals employed in full-time paid work tend to spend 8.42 hours working each weekday. Those that hold multiple jobs spend more hours working than people who have one job. Increasingly, people in the United States need to hold multiple jobs to make ends meet (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). But what about unpaid work, such as housework, caring for family members, volunteering, and other needed work, such as planning and budgeting for a family? We will look closely at who does that work, and how much time it takes. Lastly, we will examine the relationship between the education that a family has access to, and how this affects future employment, wealth, and health outcomes for children and families.

Education: Birth through Secondary Education

In this section we will consider what options for care and education are available to families between birth and early adulthood. We will look through an equity lens at childcare and secondary education, or K–12.

Childcare

Childcare is generally presumed to mean "non-maternal" or "non-parental care of young children." A big question for many is whether regular non-parental care benefits, harms or is neutral to children's development.

The most comprehensive attempt to answer this question was undertaken by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) between 1991 and 2006. In this study over 1,000 children and families participated in research conducted between the birth of the child and approximately ninth grade. This study is by far the most complete look at quantity, quality, and types of childcare to date (figure 13.1).



Figure 13.1. Both home and childcare environments can contain high-quality materials that support children's learning and development. Photograph by Gautam Arora is licensed under the Unsplash License.

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Childhood and Youth Development provides a great deal of basic information about childcare, along with detailed findings. The most significant findings were a correlation between a child's cognitive, language, and social development, their parents' characteristics, and the quality of the childcare that they experienced. Quality is related to positive caregiving, as described below (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2019).

> The more standards a childcare setting meets, the more positive the caregiving. The more positive the caregiving, the higher the quality of care and the better the children's outcomes.
>
> For instance, for young children in care with smaller groups of children cared for by trained caregivers with higher levels of education in a setting with a low adult-to-child ratio, the care provided tends to be warm, attentive, and intellectually stimulating. Children who receive such care are better off developmentally.
>
> In contrast, when groups are large, when there are many children to care for but few caregivers, and the training/education of caregivers is limited, the care provided tends to be of lower quality, and children's development is less advanced.

Overall, the study found that children in childcare did not develop differently than children who were cared for by their parents. While there were some small advantages to being in childcare, parent and family characteristics were more strongly correlated. Quality childcare was correlated with these advantages as well & National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2019).

What about longer-term development and childcare? It has been found that quality, number of hours in childcare, and type of childcare are all associated with children's social-emotional and cognitive-academic functioning in the short, middle, and long term. Associations between early childhood care quality and academic achievement were found, with higher-quality childcare predicting higher academic achievement in early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence (NICHD ECCRN, 2002b, 2005a; Belsky et al., 2007; Vandell et al., 2010).

The number of hours in childcare was more related to problem behaviors in early and middle childhood (NICHD ECCRN, 2002b, 2005a) and greater risk-taking and impulsivity at age 15 (Vandell et al., 2010). These problems faded out by the end of high school, but the effects related to higher grades and admission to more selective colleges held steady (Vandell et al., 2016).

What about family life as an adult who attended childcare? Childcare seems to offer an advantage to all children, but especially children from low-income families. The effects of high-quality childcare reduce educational and wage disparities for low-income children in adulthood (Bustamante et al., 2022).

Lack of Quality Childcare Impacts U.S. Families

All of these studies that show positive effects of childcare include one qualifier: It must be "quality" childcare. Quality costs money. As noted above, quality indicators include more adults, smaller groups of children, and teachers who are educated and have access to training. This contributes to what Early Education leader Gwen Morgan pictured in figure 13.2, called "the **childcare trilemma**." She advocated for higher quality of care, better wages for teachers, and affordability for parents. She stated that a systemic solution was needed so that childcare programs could have all three in order for children to develop well in childcare settings ("The Childcare Trilemma," n.d.).



Figure 13.2. Gwen Morgan coined the term "childcare trilemma," which identified the tension between parents being able to afford quality childcare and workers being paid a living wage. "Remembering Gwen Morgan" c. NAEYC., 2015, All rights reserved. Used under fair use.

A weakness of the NICHD study was its limited involvement of children from families with lower socioeconomic statuses. There has been, however, extensive research about the federally funded Head Start program, which serves low-income families. The majority of Head Start programs are part-day and target three- and four-year-olds, although there are some infant-toddler programs (Early Head Start) and an even smaller number of full-day programs. These programs do not work well for parents who are in the paid workforce and need more childcare coverage. Unfortunately, not all families who are eligible for Head Start are enrolled, primarily due to lack of funding. It is estimated that about 40% of all eligible children are actually served (Blair, 2013).

It can be said that quality childcare can have the potential to improve or maintain a child's development and outcomes. The NICHD estimated that fewer than 10% of children are in such high-quality settings and that fewer than 10% of children are in the lowest-quality settings, with very little positive caregiving. The majority of the children in the United States are in childcare that might be described as "fair—between 'poor' and 'good'" (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2019).

The lack of quality childcare in the United States presents issues of equity. As it has become more necessary for all adults in a household to work, the demand for childcare has increased. While there are some programs that help parents pay for childcare, this varies widely across states and even within communities. The quality and quantity of childcare is also highly variable. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these problems. While some families are able to access quality childcare that they can afford, many families are left out. This is unlikely to change without a systemic look at the trilemma: workforce needs, attention to quality childcare, and livable wages for childcare teachers.

Family Choices in K–12 Education

One central tenet of the U.S. education system is that all people in our country deserve access to education, regardless of the language they speak, how much money they make, where they live, or the color of their skin. Some other countries employ tracking, which means that certain individuals are channeled into certain educational "tracks" based on their perceived capabilities for future success. Tracking limits access to education for certain groups of people. In the United States, all children and youth have access to K–12 educational opportunities.

While the United States does not "track" students in the ways some other countries do, we do still engage in some forms of tracking. For example, you may have heard of—or even experienced—ability grouping. This term refers to placing students in homogeneous groups by ability levels. In secondary school, tracking may result in college prep, honors, or AP-level courses. Historically, these different curricula were developed when more Black and working-class students were entering schools, and elite educational opportunities were reserved for upper-middle-class students, who were often White, and wanting to attend college (Staff, 2004). Therefore, tracking "quickly took on the appearance of internal segregation," which is a problem as racial discrimination in education is illegal. So, while U.S. educational systems do not force a student into a specific educational track for a specific career at an early age like some countries do, tracking by ability level is still a harmful practice in many U.S. schools. Teachers need to be aware of potential biases toward students in certain tracked groups (i.e., AP students are "good" and college prep students are "bad").

The reality is that education in the United States is not equal, and this section will help you understand how and why. Parents are faced with a different range of decisions when it comes to where their children will go to school, and much of this has to do with income. As this section will show, where you live matters. Schools vary greatly in terms of funding and resources. Many parents will select a home rental or purchase based on the reputation of the school district it is in. And families with greater wealth have the option to choose a private school instead.

The majority of schools in the United States fall into one of two categories: public or private. A **public school** is any school that is maintained through public funds to educate children living in that community or district without cost to families. The structure and governance of a public school varies by model, but they all share the characteristics of being free and open to all applicants within a defined boundary. A private school is a school that is privately funded and maintained by a private group or organization, not the government, usually by charging tuition. Private schools may follow a philosophy or viewpoint different from public schools; for example, many private schools are governed by religious institutions.

There are a variety of public school models, including traditional, charter, magnet, virtual, alternative, and language immersion. Private school models include traditional, religious, parochial, Montessori, Waldorf, virtual, boarding, and international schools. Some school models may be public or private. Figure 13.3 includes a breakdown of several school models, their funding sources, and key characteristics.

Figure 13.3. This table shows some common kinds of publicly funded schools. There are also a variety of private schools that vary greatly from region to region in the United States. "Public School Models by Funding, Enrollment, and Key Characteristics" is from "Schools in the United States" in "Foundations of American Education: A Critical Lens" by Melissa Wells and Courtney Clayton. License: CC BY-NC-SA.

School Model	Public or Private	Enrollment	Key Characteristics
Traditional Public	Public	Open/school boundary lines	State and local governance, policy, and curriculum.
Magnet	Public	Open across school district/ application or lottery	Specializes in a program (art, science, math, etc.), promotes diversity across a district.
Alternative	Public	Students who cannot attend traditional school due to a variety of factors	State and local governance, policy, and curriculum. Small class sizes and alternative scheduling. Individualized support.
Language Immersion/ Bilingual	Both	Open across school district/ application	A portion of instruction is taught in a language other than English. Students are immersed in a second language for part of instruction.
Charter	Both	Open across school district/ application or lottery	Has more autonomy from local and state authority as long as the school meets charter mission and performance measures.

One type of school not listed in the table is homeschooling. Homeschooling would not fall into either the public or private category. Homeschooling is defined as a child not enrolling in a public or private school but receiving an education at home. Each state has its own rules and regulations that families must follow and report on if homeschooling.

In addition to the schools being separated by their funding source, schools are defined by their process of enrollment. The majority of public schools operate on two basic enrollment guidelines: boundary or open. Districts with enrollment policies using school boundary lines allow all students within a geographic area to enroll in the school. If a school has an open enrollment policy,

then the school will also allow students from other geographic areas within the district to enroll if space permits.

School boundary lines are often highly politicized. Schools are publicly rated, and this affects everything from property values to the quality of teachers recruited. Ratings may be based on data sources like the school report card, which may include data on teacher education levels, teacher retention, student demographics, student performance on standardized tests, and student and teacher attendance rates. However, ratings also can be culturally biased: one nonprofit rating site called GreatSchools, which often is integrated into online realtor websites as families are choosing where to move, redid their rating formula in 2017 after it realized that their previous rating system prioritized schools in predominantly White neighborhoods (Barnum & LeMee, 2019).

Some public school models, including charter, magnet, and language immersion, may have more students desiring to apply than there is space. In these schools, applications or lotteries may be used. An application system allows schools to choose students based on characteristics such as grades, demographic diversity, or geographic area.

The federal government is responsible for providing around 9% of a school's budget. While this may not seem like very much, in 2013, that amounted to $71 billion in federal funding (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). In 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In this act, Title I, Part A (Title I) provides federal assistance to schools with large percentages of students from low-income, under-resourced families. These funds are to help ensure that all students are able to meet the state's academic standards. Schools that receive these funds are often known as Title I schools or districts. The goal of distributing funds in this way is to make schools more equitable; however, these funds only account for 9% of a school's funding. The other 91% comes from state and local funding.

State and local school funding is based on complex funding formulas, with income often sourced from taxes on income, property, or sales. In general, most states use one or a combination of three different types of funding formulas: a student-based formula, a resource-based formula, or a hybrid formula. In 2020, 38 states used a student-based or hybrid funding formula. Across the nation, each state sets its own education budget, thus creating a variance in funding and equitable education across states.

This funding disparity is further widened at the local level. Local funding makes up around 45% of a school's budget. In 47 states, funding for education is raised through property taxes (EdBuild, n.d.). Thus, schools within wealthy districts will raise more funds than schools in economically disadvantaged areas. The federal funds distributed to low-income areas through Title I do not make up for the inequities in funding.

In Focus: Funding Inequities

Funding public schools based on local property taxes can perpetuate issues of inequity when it comes to accessing resources needed for high-quality education. This NPR article explains how predominantly White school districts can receive up to $23 billion more than districts that serve predominantly students of color. Watch the video in figure 13.4 to learn more about how systemic racism impacts school funding.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 13.4. Systemic Racism Explained [YouTube Video]. This video will help you understand how policies and laws implemented a century ago impact today's children. Transcript. "Systemic Racism, Explained" by act.tv. License: Standard YouTube License.

As you view this film, are you reminded of what you read about redlining in Chapter 8?

With so many school models available in the United States, how do families choose which type of school their child should attend? School choice is a complex issue for families to navigate. What may be best for one student is not always best for another. The choices for students also vary by geographic and socioeconomic boundaries. Many families make school decisions based on the following factors:

- Transportation and distance to chosen school
- Cost or tuition of school
- Curriculum and programs available
- Religious affiliation
- Fit for the individual student

Families in some areas of the United States also have greater access to the different models of schools presented than others. Small rural towns may only have one school within the immediate area.

One reason that school choice has become so politicized is the use of school vouchers. School **vouchers** are usually government-supplied coupons that can be used to offset tuition at an eligible private school. School voucher policies and programs today vary across localities and are present in over 30 states. Students who receive vouchers enroll in a private school that receives those funds. The voucher may cover tuition in full or offset it significantly.

Vouchers are funded by one of the following: tax revenues, tax credits, or private organizations (Epple et al., 2017). The majority of states that use tax revenues to fund their vouchers provide vouchers to under-resourced students.

When a student uses a voucher to attend a private school, this changes the funding formula for a local school. This student is no longer included in the funding formula for the local or state educational agency. This means that the local and state budget is lowered because one less student is being counted in that funding formula. School vouchers are provided and promoted to give under-resourced students school choice, but not all students have equal opportunities.

Public schools allow and are required by law to provide services for all students. While policies prohibit private schools from discriminating against students based on race, many religious private schools may consider religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and disability in their admission decisions. Private schools are not exempt from discrimination laws, but the application process allows them to choose which students to admit. For example, a private school receiving government funds must provide students with disabilities with accommodations unless these accommodations change the philosophy of the academic program or create "significant difficulty or expense." A large portion of private schools do not hire teachers trained to provide accommodations; thus, they do not have the resources to serve students with disabilities. Vouchers are not beneficial for students with disabilities who cannot attend private schools, but vouchers also hinder these students further by diverting funds from the public schools that do provide these services.

In these next two sections, we will discuss several groups of students who may face discrimination in schools. Imagine yourself as a parent sending your child to school for the first time or to a new school. What kinds of additional challenges might families face when they wonder, "Will my child fit in? Will my child be accepted?"

Neurodiverse and Neurotypical Students

Neurodiversity is a term that means that brain differences are naturally occurring variations in humans. The neurodiversity perspective sees brain differences rather than brain deficits. Instead of viewing differences as disordered or needing to be cured, a neurodiverse perspective sees differences as welcome variants of the human population (Walker, 2021).

People whose brains are wired differently than expected are called neurodivergent. Neurodivergent people have significantly better capabilities in some categories and significantly poorer capabilities in other categories (Doyle, 2020). You may hear many labels and diagnoses that make up neurodivergence: attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, dyslexia, dyscalculia, learning difference, and many more words, as described in figure 13.5.

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

Figure 13.5. What is Neurodiversity? [YouTube Video]. As you watch the first five minutes of this video, consider the experience of this neurodiverse person. How does inequality in education show up for her? Transcript. "What Is Neurodiversity?" by The Counseling Channel. License: Standard YouTube License.

Researcher David Pollack provides a model of neurodivergence in figure 13.6, which relates several of the labels we listed at the beginning of this section. People experience many different and overlapping learning differences as part of being neurodivergent.

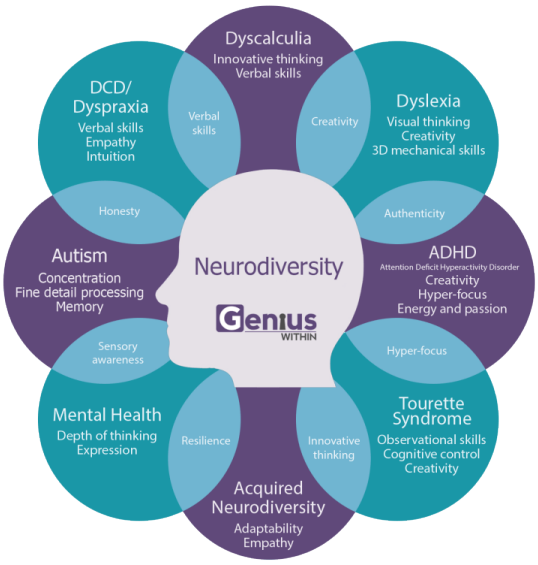


Figure 13.6. Neurodiversity is complicated. Image description. Neurodiversity Is Complicated © Genius Within CIC. Source: Dr. Nancy Doyle, based on the highly original work of Mary Colley. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

In the 1990s, adults with these labels began to push back against these categorizations. Their alternate claim was that these conditions should be considered normal human variants of neurology. Patient-centered care advocate Valerie Billingham coined the phrase, "Nothing about me, without me" (Billingham, 1998). She was talking about the need to include the patient at the center of decision-making around patient health and patient treatment choices.

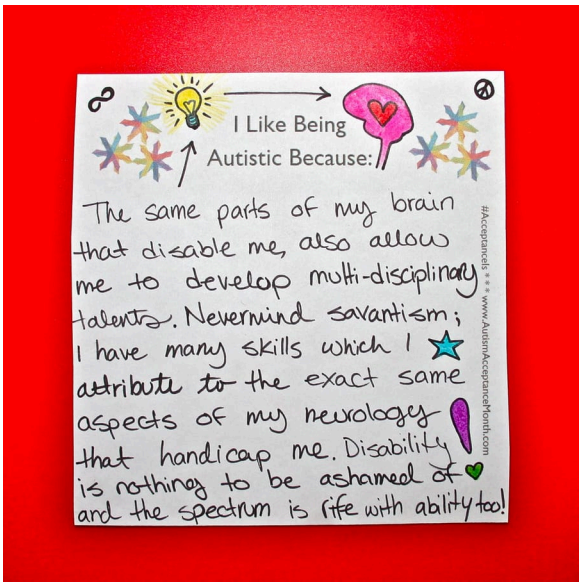


Figure 13.7. This note provides some of the positive experiences of neurodiversity. Image description. Photo by walkinred. License: CC BY-SA 2.0.

This phrase is used widely today by autism awareness activists, who have expanded the meaning to include the idea that people who are neurodivergent should be the ones describing their own experiences. The letter in figure 13.7 provides one example of this. People with autism are the ones who should make choices about what they need to fully participate in school and in life.

They should propose the laws, policies, and practices that make their participation possible.

Some experts see neurodiversity itself as a civil rights challenge. They argue that society privileges people who are considered neurotypical. Not only are neurodiverse people stigmatized with a label that implies disease, symptom, or medical problem, but social institutions themselves are unequal. They propose that we strive for "neuro-equality (understood to require equal opportunities, treatment and regard for those who are neurologically different)" (Fenton & Khran, 2007). Likewise, Nick Walker, a queer, transgender, autistic scholar, writes (Walker, 2021):

> The neurodiversity paradigm starts from the understanding that neurodiversity is an axis of human diversity, like ethnic diversity or diversity of gender and sexual orientation, and is subject to the same sorts of social dynamics as those other forms of diversity—including the dynamics of social power inequalities, privilege, and oppression.

Rainbow Flags and Black Lives Matter

In 2021, the school board of the small town of Newberg, Oregon, voted to ban the display of Black Lives Matter and Gay pride symbols at school and found themselves in the national spotlight. The video in figure 13.8 describes the school board's reasoning and the community's reaction. This local experience is not unique. In school boards, state legislatures, and national forums, students, teachers, parents, and community members discuss these questions. For example, on March 28, 2022, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed the Parental Rights in Education Bill, which prohibits teachers from teaching about sexual orientation or gender identity in kindergarten through third grade.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 13.8. Newberg's Ban on Pride Flags at Schools Gets National Attention [YouTube Video]. The Newberg School Board banned Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ+ pride symbols in 2021. Transcript. "Newberg School BLM and Pride are Banned" by KGW News. License Terms: Standard YouTube License.

The debate over these decisions reflects a larger social problem for another unique group: LGBTQIA+ students, as shown in figure 13.9. LGBTQIA+ is an acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and more.



Figure 13.9. People who are queer, Black, and disabled are positioned in front of a rainbow flag. These students face bullying, discrimination, homelessness, and violence because of their gender and sexual identities. Photograph by Chona Kasinger, Disabled And Here. License: CC BY 4.0.

When we look at the experience in school, most research shows that queer youth are more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to attend college than their straight, cisgender peers (Sansone, 2019). When we look at the recent data for Oregon in the 2020 Safe Schools report, LGBTQIA+ youth were twice as likely to be bullied or harassed at school (Heffernan & Gutierez-Schmich, 2020).

The Safe Schools report takes an intersectional approach by examining gender identity, sexual orientation, and race and ethnicity. The report finds that the more of these marginalized identities a student holds, the more likely they are to be bullied or threatened by a weapon at school (Heffernan & Gutierez-Schmich, 2020). A person who is transgender or nonbinary, queer, Native American, or mixed race is far more likely to have thought about ending their life or tried to end their life, even as early as eighth grade. The weight of this evidence is compelling. Our LGBTQIA+ students experience bullying, discrimination, and violence at school and in the wider world.

States are increasingly requiring or banning the inclusion of LGBTQIA+-related curricula. As of the end of 2023, six states explicitly required inclusion in the state curricular standards, and seven states explicitly censored discussion of LGBTQIA+ people or issues in all school curricula. The majority of states (29) neither require nor ban such curricula and discussions (Movement Advancement Project, n.d.). As of the end of 2023, over 300 bills have been introduced that prohibit K–12 educators from talking about race, racism, color, and American history, as well as gender and sexuality (Pen America index of educational gag orders, n.d.). All families, not just those who have members that are Black, multiracial, or LGBTQIA+, should consider how this attempt to create invisibility of some students and history erasure will affect families and communities.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=999#h5p-54

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“Neurodiverse and Neurotypical Students” and “Rainbow Flags and Black Lives Matter” adapted from “Education as a Social Problem” by Kim Puttman in “Social Problems” [manuscript in press], Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0. Adaptations: excerpting two sections; editing for brevity; addition of an overview of legislation related to curricular bans in K–12 education.

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13.3: Post-Secondary Education and Families

As of January 22, 2021, there are approximately 19.6 million students enrolled in postsecondary education institutions in the United States (Hanson, 2021). This number includes both undergraduate and graduate students. You might think that the average college student is an 18-year-old right out of high school, and while these students are still in the majority, the composition of college students, especially those at community colleges, has changed markedly over time.

Emerging adulthood, the time between finishing secondary education and the beginning of the markers of adulthood (such as finishing college, starting a career, marriage, and a home purchase), has been identified as a stage separate from early adulthood and middle adulthood. This trend means that college students have a wider age range than previous generations. The overall college enrollment rate for 18- to 24-year-olds decreased from 41% in 2010 to 38% in 2021, a gradual decline (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023).

Still, the majority of college students, especially in four-year schools, are in the 18- to 24-year-old age range, and a Google image search, shown in figure 13.10, demonstrates that this is the predominant image we have of college students.

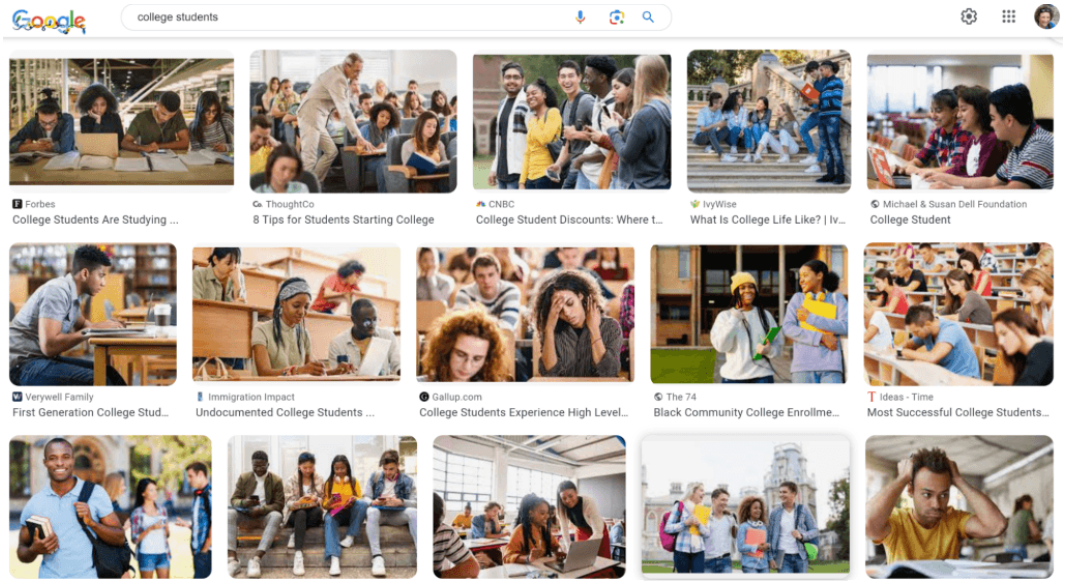


Figure 13.10. A search result for "college students" in Google Images shows mostly younger people in their late teens or early 20s. "What Google Thinks College Students Look Like" by Elizabeth B. Pearce. License: CC BY 4.0.

The federal financial aid system also makes a presumption about younger college students. Requirements that students under 24 years old also submit their parents' income when they apply for aid presume that they are still being supported by their parents. This will be discussed further in the next section.

With an increasing emphasis on post-secondary certificates and college degrees, it is helpful to know about the factors that may influence a person's decision to enroll in postsecondary education. This could help policymakers decide on and pass effective legislation that incentivizes college enrollment and could also lead to more programs and acts designed to help those who are less likely to enroll in a degree program. For example, it has been noted that older women are less likely to enroll in postsecondary education due to the responsibility of taking care of their children. Therefore, if policymakers and education institutions are aware of this influence, they can develop programs to assist mothers who wish to enroll. One example of this may be offering a stipend to parents for use with childcare.

Differences between Certificates and Degrees

The differences between certificates, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and advanced degrees boil down to these five factors:

1. **Time:** How long does it take to earn the credential?
2. **Tuition:** How many courses/units/credits will it take to obtain the credential, and how much will that cost?
3. **Admission requirements:** What the college expects your skill level to be prior to starting coursework.
4. **Level of study/amount of coursework:** Will you study something very specific or something more general?
5. **Career opportunities:** A certificate usually means you have completed a specialized form of training. It may demonstrate technical knowledge in a field, and generally, it is faster to complete than a degree. Sometimes, a certificate can be a benchmark that applies toward a degree.

Associate's degrees are commonly referred to as "two-year" degrees. There are some "career-ready" degrees, such as some health and early childhood professions, information technology, and culinary arts. Associate's degrees may also be used as a stepping stone toward some required classes for bachelor's degrees.

Bachelor's degrees are commonly referred to as "4-year" degrees. If you want to pursue a career or an advanced degree in teaching, engineering, architecture, business, or finance, a bachelor's degree may be required.

Advanced degrees such as Master's or Doctoral degrees typically require between one and six years of a combination of education, research, internships, and written publications.

Personal factors, societal influences, and social identities all seem to influence whether and where an individual will embark on a degree in higher education. Being a female has a positive effect on the highest educational achievement level over being a male. In terms of ethnicity, a Non-Black/Hispanic person is less likely to attend college than a Black person. If a student was home-schooled, then they are significantly less likely to attend college than if they were to attend a public high school. The higher the household income of an individual, the more likely that individual is to attend college and complete more years of schooling. All of these elements, and several others, contribute to the likelihood that an individual will continue into higher education (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). One trend noted in the age of college students is that the enrollment of students over the age of 24 is declining while the enrollment of students under the age of 24 is increasing. One possible explanation for the decrease in enrollment for older age groups may be partially due to economic improvement (Hanson, 2021).

Determining how factors like race, age, and gender can impact an individual's likelihood of attending college is important because research in this area can be utilized when writing policies meant to encourage enrollment for groups who are less likely to continue their education. Education is an effective way to increase human capital for a person's self, family, and future generations. Wages and socioeconomic status follow suit and can be a tool used to lessen wealth inequality in the United States.

Family Structure and Longevity

How does education relate to family structure and longevity? First, let's look at marriage, both at the likelihood of marriage and the longevity of marriage.

In the 1970s, people with high school degrees and with college degrees were just as likely to get married. But that has changed over time. In 2021, while all people are marrying less, 44% of those 18 or older with a high school diploma are likely to marry, while 61% of those with a bachelor's degree or higher are likely to marry (Mandapat et al., 2023). In addition, 78% of women with a college degree are likely to have marriages of 20 years or more (78%), compared to 40% of those with a high school education or less (Wang, 2015). While the research tells us what is happening, it doesn't actually tell us why it is happening. However, we do know that education has a positive correlation with marriage, as shown in figure 13.11.

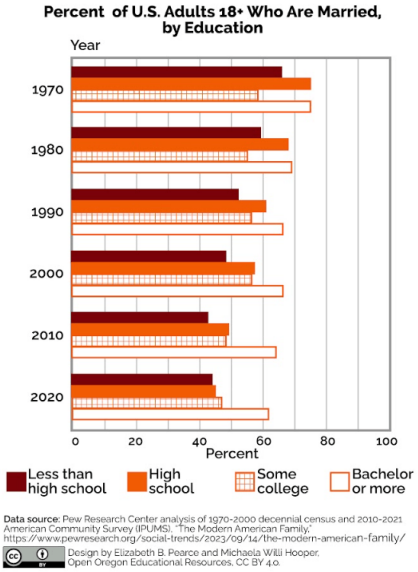


Figure 13.11. Looking at adults of 18+ years, we can see a correlation between education and the likelihood of being married. The more education a person has, the more likely they are to be married. Image description. "Percent of US Adults 18+ Who Are Married by Education " by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0. Based on data from Pew Research Center analysis of 1970-2000 decennial census and 2010-2021 American Community Survey (IPUMS), "The Modern American Family"

In contrast, people seem to have fewer children the more educated that they are. In 2020, the average number of lifetime births per woman aged 40 to 44 was two births. However, that average varies with education; women with high school degrees or less have an average of 2.2 children, and women with a bachelor's degree or more average 1.8 children. All of these rates have declined since 1970 (Mandapat et al., 2023).

Figure 13.12 illustrates the link between life expectancy and education; increasingly, those with a bachelor's degree can expect to live longer lives than those without a degree. The gap between the two groups widened during the pandemic. In 2020, the life expectancy at age 25 for all adults is 58.3 years for those with a bachelor's degree and 49.82 years for those without one (accounting for the widening mortality gap between American adults with and without a bachelor's degree [Case & Deaton, 2023])

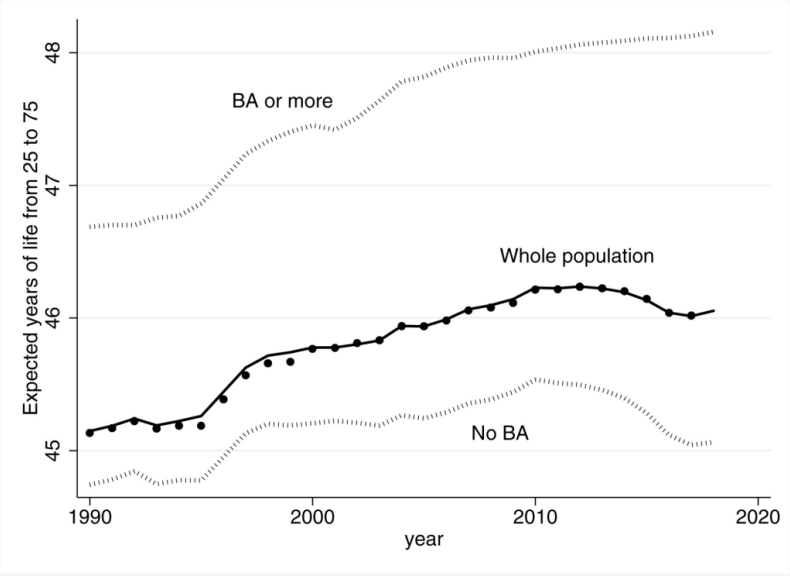


Figure 13.12. This graph shows the correlation between education and life expectancy, which is typically measured by how long people live after the age of 25. While life expectancy is dipping for those without a bachelor's degree, it continues to rise for those with a bachelor's degree or higher. "Expected Years of Life 25 to 75 by BA Status" by PNAS. License: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

In this section, we have discussed the relationship between family structure and longevity with education. But what about the other social factors that affect individual and family outcomes, such as ethnicity, sexuality, and socioeconomic status? As you

read the following sections, consider again the concept of intersectionality. Think about how social identities impact access to education and the quality of education. This will help you to see how education, social identities, and family structure are all related.

College Students Who Are Also Parents

Parents who are also college students live at the intersection of two social constructions that don't quite fit them. First, they often do not fit the demographic of the "traditional college student," which the Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis describes as "someone who begins college immediately after high school, enrolls full-time, lives on campus, and is ready to begin college-level classes" (Deil-Amen, 2011). While community colleges have long served this student population, universities are more recently adapting to this student group and the ways that their needs differ.

Secondarily, student parents may not fit the socially constructed family ideal either, at least in terms of how a paying job or career fits into their family life. They are likely to have a family where "all adults are working" meaning that whether single or coupled, someone(s) has paid employment in addition to a college career. This creates immediate conflicts in prioritization because they are not only "balancing work and family" but likely "school, work, and family."

The COVID-19 pandemic hit this group of families particularly hard as their multiple work, schooling, and children's environments collided. Many students, including parents, work in lower-paying industries while going to school to better their situations for themselves and their children. Those settings and jobs were often eliminated when locations such as restaurants, bars, and other service industries were shut down. In other cases, work at places such as food production and canning, grocery stores, or medical settings were still open but brought a higher risk of infection. Schools, from childcare settings to college settings, were unpredictable in their hours and services. Student parents were, and to some extent, continue to be, in a constant state of planning, responding, and trying to survive in environments compounded by uncertainty.

Generational Inequities in Education

When we examine how our students perform in school—how many grades students attend school; whether they can read, write, reason critically, or use computers; whether they graduate from high school or end up at NASA or being brain surgeons—we see a difference between wealthy White male students and those who are not. The **achievement gap** refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students, such as White students and students of color, for example, or students from higher-income and lower-income households (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

The achievement gap between women and men is closing. Colleges and universities in the United States enroll at least as many women as men, and more women than men appear to be graduating (Parker, 2021). However, differences in educational outcomes persist when you examine the trends using race and class. When you apply intersectional analysis to education, such as students who are poor, LGBTQIA+, or in other minoritized groups, the differences in outcomes become even more pronounced. And it is clear that socioeconomic status, as well as aspects of identity, are passed down through generations of families.

Federal Student Aid and Loans

Let's talk about how a college student's family structure and legal ties affect federal student aid and loans. Whether or not you have qualified for federal grants and loans, the system affects you, and the authors expect that you know this quite well.

The federal aid system makes some assumptions about families: first, that parents will always pay for the education of their children if the children are younger than 24 years. Conversely, they consider a child who is 24 years or older to be "independent" and that their parents will not be contributing to their education. Making this distinction leads the government to consider the parents' income and accumulated wealth when it comes to awarding financial aid, but only when students are younger than 24 years. Right away, we can see some flaws and inequities in this regulation. Some parents will pay for education regardless of the child's age; others will not. Some families have accumulated wealth over generations of privilege; others may have gone without necessities to set aside savings for a health care crisis or retirement. All wealth is not created equally. This rule does not recognize the nuances of the parent-child relationship or the privilege and oppression that contributes to the attainment of wealth and savings.

The federal aid system also differentiates between married couples and cohabiting or common law relationships. It presumes

that a married couple combines their resources and that a cohabiting couple does not, so marrying a partner who has a higher income will likely lessen a financial aid award while cohabiting with them will not.

Student debt, the remaining payments on loans that students take to afford college, is becoming an increasingly common issue for graduates and for people who do not complete a degree. College costs have increased dramatically in the past 40 years, and student debt rates have followed. Does student debt influence the likelihood of marriage? Because many wish to be financially stable before marrying, it is possible. Anecdotal reports and news stories indicate that people are delaying marriage based on student debt loads. Studying this is complicated, but one demographic review found that women were more likely to put off marriage when they had student loans to repay (Bozick & Estacion, 2014).

Educational Debt, Not Achievement Gap

Achievement gaps based on social location persist. As researchers and community members, we can note the facts, but the more important question is *why?* Understanding the complex causes of this persistence may help us act in ways that will close the gap. If our education is intended to be universal, all students must have equal access and outcomes not based on social identity or social location.



Figure 13.13. Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, educator and educational researcher, argues that we need to examine educational debt rather than focusing on the achievement gap. "Image of Gloria Ladson-Billings" by Marcus Miles from "Gloria Ladson-Billings: Daring to Dream in Public" by Käri Knutson, University of Wisconsin-Madison. License: Fair Use.

Gloria Lasdon-Billings, an educator and an educational researcher (figure 13.13), is the president of the American Educational Research Association. In her presidential address of 2006, she examines the achievement gap and explores what makes the most effective teacher, particularly those teachers who can close the achievement gap for Black students. If you would like to learn more about her, read this article: Gloria Ladson-Billings: Daring to Dream in Public.

In her 2006 presidential address, Ladson-Billings argues that researchers should study educational debt rather than the achievement gap. **Educational debt** is the cumulative impact of fewer resources and other harm directed at students of color. This education debt includes economic, sociopolitical, and moral characteristics (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Economically, educational debt consists of unequal spending in education over centuries. Segregation supported economic inequality in education. Today, because schools are funded based on population and property tax revenues, schools in rich neighborhoods, which are more likely to be White, spend more on each individual child's education.

People of color are less likely to be involved in decision-making in school districts, state houses, and the federal government. For example, in 2018, 78% of school board members were White, even though 50% of all public school students are not White (Bland, 2022; National School Boards Association, 2018). Families of color are excluded from power in education.

Ladson-Billings argues that the achievement gap is a result of educational debt. Further, educational debt is caused by the wider

social forces of systemic racism, poverty, and health inequities rather than the cause of the inequality itself (Ladson-Billings, 2006). If you want to learn more about the experience of educational debt, please watch "How America's Public Schools Keep Kids in Poverty [TED Video]."

If you would like to explore the social problems related to the cost of college and student debt, use the "Helping College Students" video and activity in the "Going Deeper" section.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=1001#h5p-55

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13.4: Gender, Work, and Family

Intertwined with the idealized nuclear family is the gendered work world, or separate spheres, in which men went to paid work, and women took care of the home, the children, and the man's needs. But as we have discussed throughout this text, not only was this idealized family able to exist as a majority for a very short period of time, it also excluded many families. As we know, one of the ways that families have changed in the United States is directly related to the continued decline of the economy after its peak in the mid-1970s, which means that many more families need to have all the adults (whether one adult, two adults, or more) in any given household employed with paid work. In this section we will focus primarily on gender, because of its significant role in family ideals, but we will also touch on other social identities.

Occupational Segregation

The workplace has seen many changes in the last few hundred years. One of the first groups fighting for working women's rights was the Daughters of Liberty, formed in 1765. (Sweet, 2021). In 1873, the Supreme Court ruled that women were prohibited from practicing law. The finding stated, "it was natural and proper for women to be excluded from the legal profession" as women were expected to fulfill "the duties of motherhood and wife" (Oyez, n.d.). Positive progress was made toward gender equality in the workplace with the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963. It stated that companies could not pay people differently for the same work based on gender.



Figure 13.14. Captain Amy Bauernschmidt became the commanding officer of the USS *Abraham Lincoln* in 2022. She is the first female captain of an aircraft carrier in the U.S. Navy. Captain Amy Bauernschmidt by the Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet is in the Public domain.

More recently, in 2013, the U.S. military allowed women to serve in previously closed combat designations. 2022 saw the first female aircraft carrier captain in the history of the U.S. Navy, Captain Amy Bauernschmidt, shown in figure 13.14. When Captain Bauernschmidt started her career at the U.S. Naval Academy in the early 1990s, women were prohibited from serving on combat ships (Lendon et al., 2022). Additionally, transgender people have been allowed to openly serve in the U.S. military as of 2016.

In Focus: Military Workplace Policies and Family Formation

The branches of the military, which include the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard, are funded by the federal government. As an employer, the federal government has particular policies that apply to families. Two of the most well-known apply to relationships, sexuality and marriage.

For the majority of this nation's military history, members of the LGBTQIA+ community have been disqualified from employment and service. This doesn't mean that they didn't serve, but they were stigmatized and hidden. The policy changed between 1994

and 2011, when the infamous rule "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" (Don't Ask, Don't Tell) was in effect. During this time, gay men, lesbian women, and bisexual people were permitted to be employed as long as they did not exhibit or talk about conduct that could be identified in these ways; in addition, others were prohibited from discriminating against or harassing them. The "Don't Pursue" aspect of the regulation limited the investigations by superiors of members presumed to belong to the LGBTQIA+ community.

The law, which appeared to signify progress, still resulted in many members of the military experiencing stigma, stalled careers, discrimination, harassment, and violence. Multiple legal challenges were filed, and it was eventually repealed. While the regulation has changed, stigma and harassment remain.

Necko L. Fanning wrote this in *The New York Times* about his experience serving in the Army between 2011 and 2014 (Fanning, 2019):

> The second week after I arrived at Fort Drum, New York—my first and only duty station with the Army—I found death threats slipped under the door of my barracks room. I noticed the colors first. Pink, blue, and yellow; strangely happy colors at odds with the words written on them. Some were simple: slurs and epithets written in thick black Sharpie, pressed so hard into the paper that it bled through. "Faggot" and "queer fag," the notes read. A couple were more elaborate: detailed descriptions of what might happen to me if I was caught alone, and proclamations about the wrongness of gays in the military.
>
> The military is built on a foundation of earning trust and proving yourself to your peers and superiors as capable. Being new to a unit isn't unlike being a new employee at any other job. People are cautious, even wary, until you've shown you can handle the work....My capability wasn't in question, nor was my duty position. It wasn't my effectiveness or value to the unit that elicited these noxious notes but something far removed from my control. Something that after September 2011 was supposed to be meaningless.

The military has also been known for policies that incentivize marriage. In general, single members of the armed forces live in barracks with a large group of colleagues. Married members, in contrast, live in military housing that more closely mimics suburban neighborhoods, which is pictured in figure 13.15. In addition, there is a housing allowance that goes along with this privilege, resulting in married military members earning more salary and benefits.



Figure 13.15. This photograph is used to market and advertise newly constructed housing benefits for the U.S. "Airmen" and families in 2017. "New Military Family Housing Benefits Airmen" U.S. Air Force. Public domain.

This incentive is provided by the military in order to support and stabilize families who are frequently moving and have less predictable work schedules than other government positions. Could this contribute to marriages made for financial reasons? Or to project heterosexuality? Anecdotally, yes, there are many stories that support this theory. When taken in combination with the prohibition of LGBTQIA+ people's service, it could also serve as a double incentive: a way to avert suspicion of unsanctioned sexuality as well as financial gain. However, getting married is a complex decision, and it is difficult to attribute only one factor in the decision to get married.

Women are currently not restricted by laws specifically preventing them from participating in the labor force. Due to societal norms, women tend to choose lower-paying jobs, which reinforces the gender wage gap. Higher-paying jobs such as pilots, finance, corporate executives, and technical services are male-dominated. Jobs seen as more suited to women's socially prescribed gendered norms of empathy and caregiving typically pay less. These lower-paying jobs include home health care workers, elementary school teachers, and nurses. Gendered societal expectations are taught to us from an early age through agents of socialization, including family, peers, religion, and media.

While gendered norms have become more balanced in most industries in recent decades, stereotypes still exist. There are many benefits to all workers, employees, and companies when people of all genders are included in a diverse range of industries. For the medical industry, having a more balanced representation of employees across all demographics provides a positive workplace for employees and better patient health outcomes (Gomez & Bernet, 2019). Addressing equal gender representation in decision-making arenas such as corporate CEOs and the Supreme Court may improve workplace equality for all genders.

Barriers to Workplace Advancement

Many obstacles still exist when it comes to achieving gender equality in the workplace. Sometimes, these barriers have been institutional, such as legally restricting women's participation in military combat roles. Sometimes, people's prejudices prevent equal gender participation in the workplace. There were times, such as in the early 1900s, when women were thought to be so delicate they could not understand complex scientific work such as chemistry and physics. People believed that thinking hard about complex situations or work-related stress would physically harm women.

The outlook is particularly challenging for people who encompass intersectional diversity, such as Black women who are single heads of households. Barriers to employment due to sexism, racism, income, parental status, and urban residence further restrict employment and advancement opportunities. These barriers are highlighted by looking at the median annual earnings for workers in figure 13.16. Worker income represented in the table for 2019 shows Latina women earn far less than other intersectional groups of race and gender.

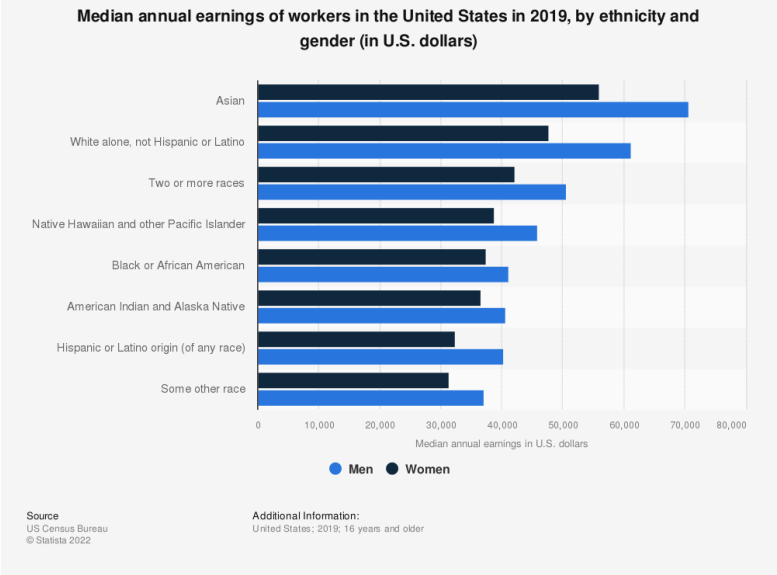


Figure 13.16. This 2019 graph shows the median annual earnings of workers in the United States by ethnicity and gender (in U.S. dollars). In all ethnicity categories, women earn less than men. Chart by Statista Research Department is in the Public domain.

Transgender workers face high levels of discrimination, even though federal laws regarding workers' rights protect them. Transgender workers have unemployment rates three times higher than cisgender people, leading to economic instability (James et al., 2016).

Gender discrimination in the workplace has a long history, but progress is being made toward equal opportunity. Societal attitudes on gendered workplace stereotypes can help move or dissolve workplace barriers for all genders. Labor force opportunities for all genders have changed due to diversity, equity, inclusion training, mentoring programs, and expanded access to childcare.

In early 2022, signaling another seismic shift in creating inclusive workplaces, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) added the nonbinary self-identification option to discrimination report forms. Although many institutional barriers have been removed from the workplace, disparities continue for access, placement, benefits, and promotions.

Gender self-presentation is also intertwined with the workplace. What we wear, our hair choices, body modifications (piercings and tattoos), and our use of cosmetics influence how others see us. In many industries, "professional" clothing is a dark-colored suit with a dress shirt and tie, which is traditional masculine workplace attire. Wearing a suit then means you should be taken seriously and have excellent knowledge about a subject. Suppose you wear clothing with pastel shades or flowery patterns, which are considered stereotypically female. In that case, you might be viewed as not committed to your profession, not as intelligent or reliable. Societal pressure to adhere to masculine normative workplace clothing is evidenced by women and nonbinary altering their workplace attire to more closely match men's traditional styles rather than men changing their clothing choices to match women's.

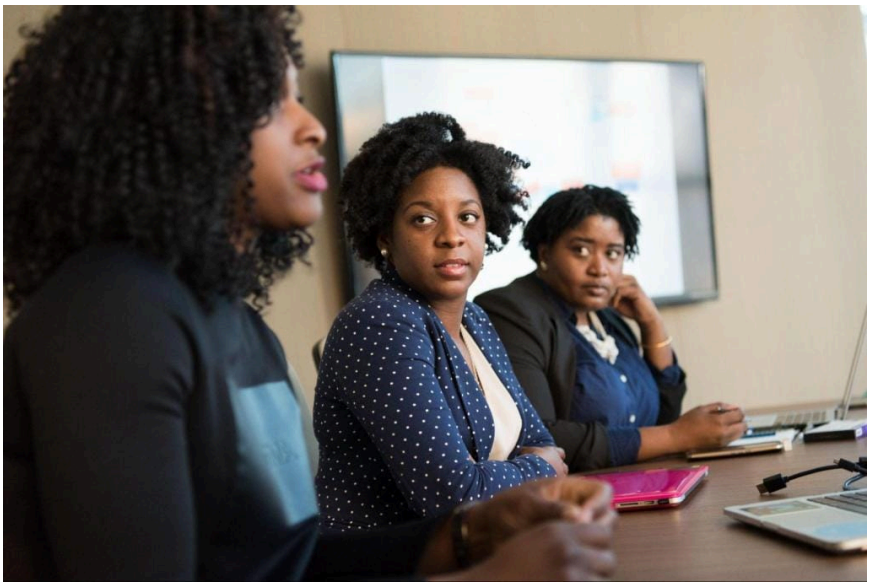


Figure 13.17. Professional people face obstacles in the workplace through gender-specific and Eurocentric expectations for the presentation of self. Photo by WOCinTech is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Black women, in particular, experience discrimination based on the presentation of natural hair textures and styles in the workplace. Figure 13.17 shows professional people with non-Eurocentric hairstyles. Wearing a non-Eurocentric hairstyle has negatively affected Black women's employment and promotion opportunities into leadership roles (Koval & Rosette, 2021). Women of color have been litigating for years for the acceptance of natural hair in the workplace, often with inconsistent outcomes.

Invisible Barriers

Although women make up nearly half of the U.S. workforce, only about 15% of Fortune 500 companies had female CEOs by early 2022. This is a notable increase from 1.4% in 2002 (Buchholz, 2022). The **glass ceiling** is the lack of advancement opportunities for non-males in high-level positions. This invisible barrier, due to a variety of factors, prevents non-males from achieving positions of power. Power in the workplace may include deciding how to spend the company's money, who gets hired or fired, or what products to make.

In some industries, such as nursing, nontraditional gender workers are advanced at a higher rate. This quick movement from entry-level to power-holding, higher-paying leadership jobs is called the **glass escalator**. Males are nontraditional gendered workers in the nursing profession, making up 12% of nurses in 2021 (BLS, 2021). Yet somehow, nearly half of nursing leadership roles are held by men. Researchers attribute this phenomenon to both the glass ceiling and the glass escalator. Research has shown that White males mostly benefit from the escalator while male nurses of color do not (Bradford & Bradford-Stevenson, 2021).

Sociologists studying the workplace found another type of gender inequity, the pattern of behavior known as the **glass cliff**. This occurs when women are purposefully promoted into positions with a high risk of failure. This typically occurs when companies are

already experiencing problems. Promotions with significant increases in pay and responsibility are difficult to pass up, even with the likely harmful outcome. Research shows that when women are placed on a glass cliff, this reinforces the stereotype that they are poor leaders (Kagan, 2022).

Women on the glass cliff have higher-level roles in companies, but this is still not common overall. Many women find themselves stuck on the ground floor of the employment power ladder. The **sticky floor** refers to positions typically held by women, where advancement to the next level of power is difficult. Poorly paid and unstable jobs, such as entry-level, administrative, and human service workers, are particularly vulnerable to the sticky floor syndrome. If women in these roles lack formal education or financial stability, they are not often able to leave these dead-end jobs.

Companies can work on mitigating the glass ceiling, glass escalator, glass cliff, and sticky floor in many ways. To start, fellow employees and corporate leaders need to recognize the existence of these workplace issues. Human resource departments or outside consultants can use diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives to openly discuss these problems in a safe space. Companies in difficult situations that promote women and people of color into professionally hazardous roles can ease the negative impact on employees by creating a culture of diversity and mentoring for success in higher executive levels.

Working Parents Face Additional Barriers

In 2022, across all professions, women make approximately $0.82 for every $1.00 men make (Payscale, 2022). Native American women fare the worst when race and gender intersect, making approximately $0.71 compared to White men's $1.00 (Miller, 2022). Much of this has to do with society's gendered norms steering women into low-wage positions. However, it is also related to the roles that women play in childbearing and childrearing, and at least as importantly, the roles that prospective employers expect them to play.

Gaps in career progression due to pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, and eldercare issues restrict promotion potential, which is an additional source of pay inequity over a lifetime. In general, for all workers, a female parent's pay is about $0.74 to a male parent's $1.00 (Payscale, 2022). Female heads of households are acutely susceptible to fluctuations in the economy. This can bring about role conflict, which is a situation in which contradictory, competing, or incompatible expectations are placed on an individual by two or more roles held at the same time. Role conflict for single parents finds them struggling to fulfill work obligations while also meeting their family's needs. The instability of work can negatively impact employee finances and seriously impede wealth building for their future retirement.

Single parents face discrimination based on societal assumptions that their parental role may interfere with them fulfilling their job responsibilities. Societal gender expectations we have today are rooted in historical societal norms. In the early 1900s, laws existed legally forbidding married women from working. There were also societal pressures encouraging women to leave the workforce when they got married. Even though marital age has risen over the last 50 years, the public's perception that women cannot physically work or should not participate in the workforce when married or pregnant persists. Figure 13.18 shows the changing dynamic of age at first marriage historically. There is a correlation between when women increasingly earned bachelor's degrees in the 1980s and 1990s and the noticeable increase in the age at first marriage, as seen on the chart.

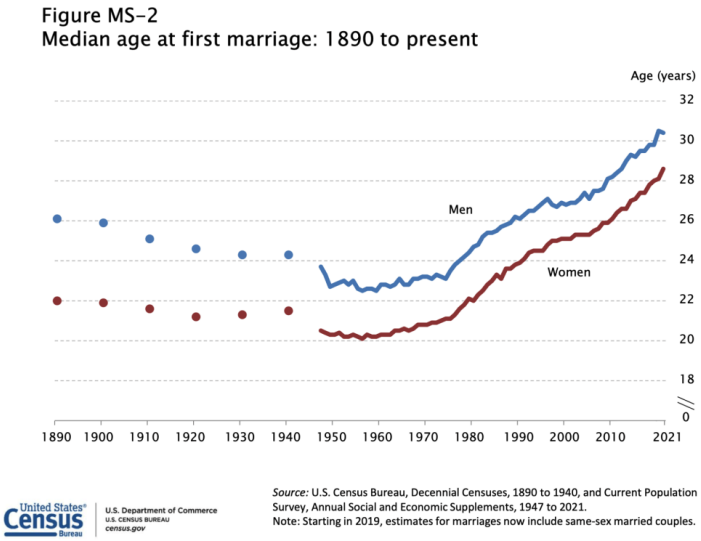


Figure 13.18. As women strengthened their participation in the workforce, the age of first marriage increased for the genders measured. Image description. Chart by United States Census Bureau in the Public domain.

As more women entered the primary sector labor market and assumed white-collar roles, greater protections were demanded for working parents. Changing societal norms acknowledged discrimination against working parents, including nursing or adoptive parents. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was passed in 1993. The FMLA protects employees from firing or losing benefits while away from work for specific family or medical reasons. Although legal protections exist for pregnant people, such as the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) passed in 1978, employers still discriminate against pregnant workers. Newly married individuals may be perceived as looking to start or expand a family, thus unreliable as future workers. In 2020, just under 400 pregnancy discrimination lawsuits were filed in federal court (Sear & Goldstein, 2021). Parents on parental or adoption leave may miss out on meetings or other work, which is then used to justify passing them over for promotions, thus reinforcing pay inequities.

Access to pregnancy and family leave policies can strengthen workforces across all industries and all levels of employment. Company cultures flexible with family leave will see positive returns from their employees and the company overall. One study found that paid leave policies "led to improved infant health, with the largest effects on disadvantaged African American and unmarried mothers" (BLS, 2019).

Black women are especially susceptible to barriers in the workplace due to "unacceptably high rates of chronic illness as well as tragically high rates of maternal and infant mortality. In fact, Black women, as well as their infants, are significantly more likely to die in the weeks after birth than are any other group of people" (Milli et al., 2022). Chronic illnesses due to a lack of access to affordable health care and concerns about taking time away from work for medical care negatively impact not just the workers but companies who have to deal with prolonged gaps in their workforce. Black female workers' medical instability can also harm their chances of being hired or promoted due to misperceptions of them being unreliable workers.

This creates a cycle of oppression for women and people of color in the workforce. In a 2019 report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Latine workers were found to have the lowest access to paid leave for childcare or eldercare of all race categories. When faced with these life challenges, Latine workers do not have financial or employer support for missing work, which creates financial hardships (BLS, 2019). Taking time away from work for childcare or eldercare crises may also indicate to employers the worker is unreliable or not focused on their job.

The intersectional nature of some workers' demographics and life experiences can negatively affect their pay and work opportunities. In this section, we have highlighted how being a parent or being of childbearing age offers another identity that faces pay discrepancies and pay discrimination. Such concerns are the basis of unconscious and conscious biases in the hiring and promotion processes.

Comprehension Self Check

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"Working Parents Face Additional Barriers" adapted from "Pay Discrepancies" and "Pay Discrimination" by Jane Forbes in "The Sociology of Gender" [manuscript in press], Open Oregon Educational Resources. License: CC BY 4.0. Adaptations: combining two sections with a focus on parenting.

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13.5: Care Work

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Laci Lourenzo

What do you consider work? Do you consider work as loading and running the dishwasher before catching a train on the subway? What about washing a load of laundry after an eight-hour restaurant server shift? Calling the doctor to make an appointment for your sick child? It is the mundane everyday activities such as shopping for groceries, making meals, scheduling appointments and play dates, cleaning the bathrooms, and various other tasks that make households that are less often viewed as official work. This kind of work is called **care work**, the daily work that keeps a household running and the adults and children well cared for.

When care work is performed by someone who also is working outside of the home, it is called the second shift, coined by researcher Arlie Hochschild. She found that women are more likely than men to perform work inside the home in addition to working outside the home (Hochschild, 1990). The balance of household responsibility has changed as companies recognize the need for employee-life balance, cultural acceptance of stay-at-home dads, and the growing egalitarian ideologies between partners, but women still have a longer second shift (Blair-Loy, 2015).

Shifting family dynamics due to re-partnering, marriage, divorce, or death create unique challenges for all families experiencing these significant transitions. Expectations of chore responsibilities inside the home may vary for members who live across multiple residences. Differing household rules or strained relationships with new family members can cause household conflict. The concept of boundary ambiguity helps us understand that not all families, and thus their expectations for household work, are the same. Boundary ambiguity "is defined as the family not knowing who is in and who is out of the system" (Boss and Greenberg 1984:535). This idea encompasses physical and psychological presence or absence, as graphically presented in figure 13.19.



Figure 13.19. For many children and adults, changing family structures can bring about boundary ambiguity, meaning it's not always clear who is part of a family and what the expectations are for a person's role in the family. Photographby Gerd Altmann. License: Pixabay License.

Transgender and gay relationships create unique challenges for households. When gay male families where one partner was the children's biological father were studied, boundary ambiguity was highlighted due to institutional factors such as "heterosexism, legal decisions, and beliefs and practices encouraged in religious institutions" (Jenkins, 2013) as well as interpersonal factors such as "the relationship of the gay parent with his ex-spouse and children" (Jenkins, 2013).

Lack of Childcare and Eldercare

Appearance and behavioral standards are not the only workplace barriers for employees. Workers may be responsible for taking care of children or other adults. Lack of childcare or caring for an elderly person creates physical and emotional strain for many workers. Women have long been considered to have natural, internal instincts for raising children. Such expectations can create

barriers for women in the workplace when they are expected to be the primary caregivers, although, for many families, they are not. Research has shown concerns for children's care while at work cause increased stress. Caregiving for children or the elderly is stressful and takes an emotional toll on the caregiver. Negative health outcomes for caregivers exist for all gender caregivers, yet women take on a disproportionate amount of caregiving globally (Sharma et al., 2016).

Finding and affording childcare became an increasing concern for low-wage workers through the late 20th century as more women gained full-time employment. Although the percentage of women in the workplace peaked in the late 1990s, the need for safe, affordable childcare and eldercare persists today.

Data from late 2020, about six months after the COVID-19 pandemic, showed childcare as an increasing problem for all gender parents. With many schools closed then, women were more likely than men to express increased responsibilities and difficulties balancing work and childcare responsibilities. (Schaeffer, 2022). By June 2021, another study found that "Globally, women took on 173 additional hours of unpaid childcare last year, compared to 59 additional hours for men." (Avi-Yonah, 2021). This is nothing new, as women have traditionally assumed responsibility for the care of family members.

In Focus: Pandemic Parenting

The pandemic has affected parents, especially mothers, in the paid workforce. The transition to online schooling and stay-at-home orders during the coronavirus pandemic required at least one adult in the home to focus on the children—helping them with schoolwork and supervising them all day.

While there was no immediate impact on detachment or unemployment, working mothers in states with early stay-at-home orders and school closures were 68.8% more likely to take leave from their jobs than working mothers in states where closures happened later, according to new research by the U.S. Census Bureau and Federal Reserve (Heggeness, 2020). While one study found that dads increased their childcare role during the pandemic, it also showed moms spent the most time caring for children (Sevilla & Smith, 2020).

In the United States, around one in five (19.6%) of working-age adults said the reason they were not working was because COVID-19 disrupted their childcare arrangements, as shown in figure 13.20.

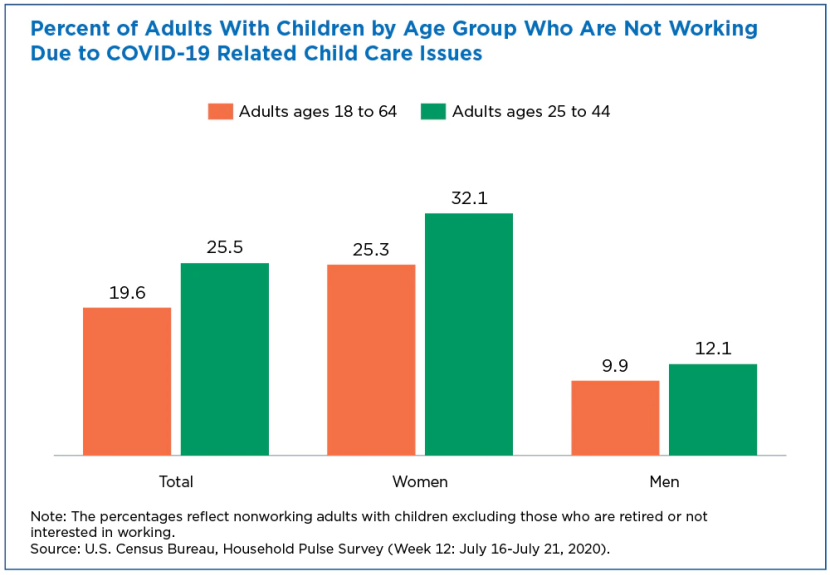


Figure 13.20. This graph shows that in two different age groups (18 to 64 years and 25 to 44 years), the percentage of women who are not working specifically due to COVID-19 childcare issues is much higher than it is for men. "Women, Work, and Parenting" from "Parents Juggle Work and Child Care During Pandemic" by the U.S. Census Bureau. Public domain.

Eldercare is another barrier many women face in the workplace. As women's careers progress, they are also unequally responsible for the care of aging parents. Known as the **sandwich generation**, people who support the needs of their children and parents simultaneously can find these responsibilities strain finances, time, and work commitments. As women's roles in the workplace have become more socially normed over the last 30 years, men's participation as caregivers for elderly relatives has increased. One study found that "women who cared for ill parents were twice as likely to suffer from depressive or anxious symptoms as

non-caregivers" (National Center on Caregiving at Family Caregiver Alliance, 2003). As the primary caregivers for elderly parents and relatives, women's health is negatively impacted, yet many report positive emotional benefits to this role, as shown in figure 13.21.



Figure 13.21. Senior people have a lifetime of experiences to share with young people. Photograph by 963797. License: Pixabay License.

Low-income, typically people of color, and single heads of households, which are historically predominantly women, face intensified childcare and eldercare burdens due to ever-increasing costs. Recent data shows that "Oregon is ranked 14th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for most expensive infant care" (Economic Policy Institute, 2020). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which studies these trends, recognizes affordable care as "no more than 7% of a family's income," yet "Infant care for one child would take up 22.2% of a median family's income in Oregon" (Economic Policy Institute, 2020). When faced with childcare challenges, men who are single heads of households are more likely to be able to adjust their work responsibilities to accommodate childcare needs.

Making childcare more affordable and accessible to all families is important, especially for single parents. This means women, in particular, can be more stable employees, excel in the workplace, and build wealth over time. It also reduces the cycle of poverty for single-parent families. Support networks do exist for all gender caregivers. Private and public agencies can help with emotional and physical support. They can also help with financial advice and resources as workers stuck in low-wage positions find it difficult to move out of poverty when faced with ever-increasing childcare costs.

Emotional Labor and Kin-Keeping

Interactions with the public or customers are common across most workplaces. Many companies have written expectations for how they expect workers to perform their roles and provide a detailed script to employees. Employees may find themselves performing emotional labor when interacting with customers. Workers who perform **emotional labor** hide their emotions in the workplace to ensure a pleasant and consistent customer experience. Females dominate jobs with emotional labor, such as in education and healthcare industries, where there are frequent interactions with customers.

In addition, women traditionally have taken on the highly emotional roles of childcare and eldercare providers more often than men. And even when they don't, society often implicitly assumes that they will. It follows that women are more likely than men to perform relationship-building functions within families. The effort to build and maintain relationships between family members is called **kin-keeping** and is a part of care work.

Although kin-keeping increases the likelihood of stress due to role conflict between obligations at work and at home, especially for women, kin-keeping can have positive benefits (Gerstel & Gallagher, 1993). One study looked at African American grandmothers caring for their grandchildren. Interactions with grandchildren positively impacted the grandmothers' workplace readiness. An additional benefit was that grandmothers' workplace experiences could be shared with grandchildren (Stephens, 2019).

In Focus: Gendered Work Expectations, Taxes, and Family Wealth

Income taxes and social security are heavily dependent on the institutional marriage of the mid-20th century, specifically the breadwinner-homemaker model. Couples were more homogeneous at that time, likely to marry early and stay married longer, with men typically earning more or much of the income. Both the federal income tax system and the social security system evolved over the 20th century to correct what was considered to be the most common gender injustice: that many women made less money than their spouses (figure 13.22).

These systems failed to take into account the racial injustice of the times; when social security was implemented in 1935, it excluded all domestic and farm workers who were primarily Black people and immigrants. Both groups were added in the 1950s.

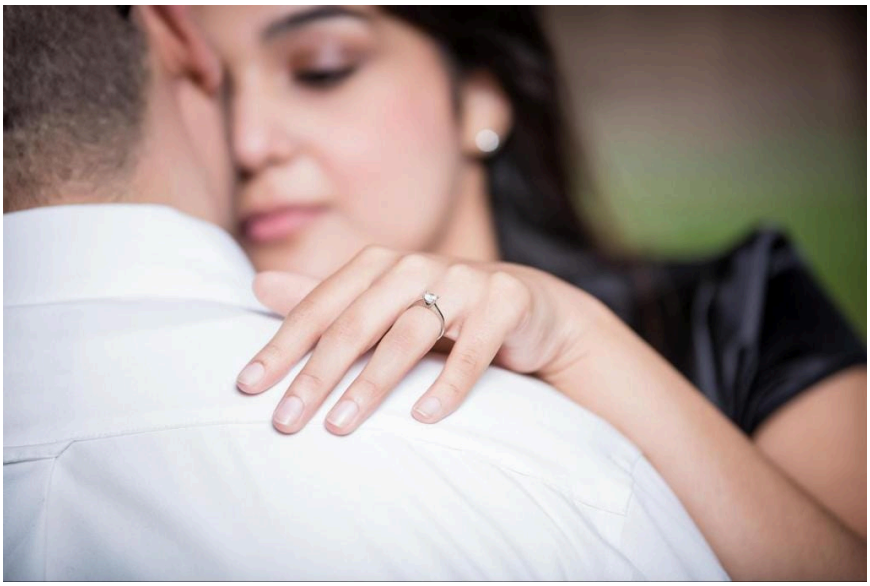


Figure 13.22. Although union formations are more diverse today, many government benefits and tax systems are based on a specific model of marriage. "Abraham & Johvanna – Ring" by FJH Photography. License: CC BY 2.0.

Much has been discussed about the "marriage bonus" and the "marriage penalty," meaning that some couples benefit from marrying, and some couples pay more taxes when they marry. The federal and state systems have changed over the years but face what is called a "trilemma" by tax experts: systems cannot simultaneously impose progressive marginal tax rates, assess equal taxes on married couples with equal earnings, and maintain marriage neutrality (meaning that married and unmarried couples pay the same amount of taxes). The net result from the trilemma is that married couples whose individual incomes are comparable pay more in taxes than a couple whose incomes are dramatically different (Alstott, 2013).

Both social security, with its emphasis on survivor benefits, and income taxes focus on the marriage ideal from the last century: one spouse (usually male) who earns most of the family's income and a lower-earning spouse (usually female). However, this has not been the norm for over 50 years, and many argue that these systems need to catch up. As explained by the postmodern theory, choice and individuality are emphasized in today's society. Diverse relationships are accepted more readily, and marriages are less assortative in most ways. Marriage is declining; people wait longer to marry, are less likely to marry, and stay married for fewer years. Couples are more likely to have equal rather than disparate individual incomes. All of these factors point to the inadequacy of the current systems and raise the question of whether these policies influence people's choice to marry or otherwise partner up.

Caregivers at Home, Caregivers at Work

Working parents in all fields face the challenge and stress of balancing their work lives with caring for their children, as well as other personal and household responsibilities. In this section, we will focus on a subset of working parents who have elected to work in jobs or careers that are focused on serving others. These fields include education, health, human services, and hospitality.

In all of these fields, there is an emphasis on serving others and, to some degree, a focus on a cause greater than oneself. For example, teachers are focused on creating a curriculum and an environment in which students achieve specific learning

outcomes. At the same time, they are concerned with their students' overall well-being. They work with 25 to 150 students each year, depending on their teaching assignments, with a societal expectation that all of these students will succeed.

How does being service-oriented in one's work life overlap with nurturing while also being a parent?

It is undeniable that the collapse of many public systems during the pandemic affected this group of caregivers powerfully, putting many of them in a public bind. Teachers who are caregivers at home faced both the immediate need to completely adapt their curriculum into online and video conferencing content at the same time, arranging for their own children or dependents to adjust to the lack of in-person services. Many times they were teaching their own children at home while responsible for the learning of a group of other students. Health workers faced the onslaught of more people needing medical care and the psychological component of being exposed to a deadly disease on a daily basis. They faced the lack of schooling, childcare, and adult day services for their own dependents while facing an increased demand on their work time.

Even in non-pandemic times, caregivers face the challenge of providing self-care while caring for others. While the pandemic exacerbated this dual challenge, it is one that is always present for this group of parents and other caregivers.

In Focus: Working with My Family

In many cases, working with family can be tricky and lead to big problems; in my family, that is not the case. In fact, we grew closer by working together on the farm. There was a lot of laughter and crying, good times and bad, but we were always together. The farm is the main reason that my family is so close and connected.



Figure 13.23. Family farming, while decreasing, can still be a bonding experience in the United States—a way of uniting work and family. Photograph by Luemen Rutkowski on Unsplash. License: Unsplash License.

My family learned a lot about each other and ourselves on the farm. My parents realized that my siblings and I had different paths we needed to take in life, and they supported us even if it wasn't including the farm. I am so grateful for the farm and the life I was given because of all those good days and bad.

Comprehension Self Check

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13.6: Looking Ahead- Laborers Who Are Undocumented

We have spent much of this chapter focused on gender and socioeconomic status. What about another group that often earns low wages? These are the workers, often immigrants, who work in seasonal or other low-wage jobs. One of the most debated topics in the United States is immigration. However, when it comes to the workforce, there is a consistent need for additional employees in farms, factories, hotels, and other industries. One way that this labor need has consistently been met is via immigrant labor, as discussed in Chapter 8 and Chapter 10.

It is not only laws that work institutionally to foster immigration but also businesses and corporations. In this excerpt of an article from The Conversation, applied research demonstrates how businesses and corporations value the contribution of immigrant laborers.

In Focus: A Preference for the Undocumented

My colleagues and I have conducted research in U.S. communities where undocumented Latinx immigrants live and work, including interviews with their employers. We focused on small businesses in rural Colorado and Georgia. We investigated how and why entrepreneurs in construction, landscaping, and low-wage service industries began actively seeking to hire undocumented Latino immigrants starting in the mid-1990s, even though immigrant workers were largely absent from these places prior to that time.

What started for many as a short-term solution to fill a labor gap turned into a preference for hiring undocumented workers. Recruitment efforts thus intensified, causing a significant growth in the Latino immigrant population in both places. In a rural Georgia county, the Latino population increased 1,760% between 1990 and 2010, due to the increase in these recruitment efforts by businesses involved in construction, landscaping, cleaning, and food provision.

Why did businesses that rely on low-wage workers develop a preference for immigrants, particularly undocumented ones?

In interviews, employers describe the undocumented Latino immigrants they hire as among the most reliable, honest, and hardworking employees they have ever had. As one Georgia employer described it:

> I think about, if I had to get rid of the nine Hispanics that I've got tomorrow and replace them with locals, to get the same amount of output, I would have to hire 15 instead of nine and I'd probably have to pay them $1 an hour more each, and that figures up quick. And there's sometimes that you just can't find people to do the work.

Most employers we interviewed began by the late 1990s to organize their businesses around the productivity and discipline offered by an undocumented immigrant workforce.

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13.7: Going Deeper

Having looked at education from birth through adulthood, as well as at paid and unpaid employment, this section has some additional resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- To review the most comprehensive study of childcare in the United States to date, see the NICHD Study of Early Childhood and Youth Development.
- If you'd like to understand more about how public schools reinforce generational poverty, watch this video: "How America's Public Schools Keep Kids in Poverty" with educator Kandice Sumner.
- To read the full article by Lise Nelson about undocumented immigrant labor, check it out here.
- Curious about pandemic parenting? Look at these two studies:
  - Why Is Mommy So Stressed Out? Estimating the Immediate Impact of the COVID-19 Shock on Parental Attachment to the Labor Market and the Double Bind of Mothers
  - Baby Steps: The Gender Division of Childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Reflective Questions

1. How does the "childcare trilemma" affect equity for families? Consider both families who work in childcare as well as families who use childcare.
2. Reflect on the choices families make in order to secure childcare and K–12 education that is desirable. What other parts of their lives may be affected by these decisions? What challenges do they face?
3. When you read the section about post-secondary education, what parts did you connect with the most? What else affects your family that was not mentioned?
4. Reflect on your reading as well as your personal experience. How does student debt affect family decisions and family life?
5. How do gender and parenting overlap to create advantage and disadvantage in the workforce?
6. When you reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic, in what ways did it affect your familial relationships (especially as connected to education and work)?
7. If you were writing the laws and regulations around taxes and social security related to union formations and kinship groups, what would they look like?

Key Terms

- **Achievement gap:** significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students.
- **Care work:** the daily work that keeps a household running and the adults and children within it well cared for.
- **Childcare:** usually used to refer to non-parental care of a young child, often in a paid provider's home or in a childcare center.

- **Childcare trilemma:** the acknowledgment that it is difficult to provide affordable, accessible, and high-quality care without some kind of subsidy or support.
- **Educational debt:** the cumulative impact of fewer resources and other harm directed at students of color.
- **Emotional labor:** the regulation or hiding of emotions as a part of a work role.
- **Glass ceiling:** an artificial, unseen, and often unacknowledged discriminatory barrier that prevents otherwise qualified people, such as women and minorities, from rising to positions of leadership and power, particularly within a corporation.
- **Glass cliff:** purposeful promotion of women into positions with high risk for failure.
- **Glass escalator:** quick movement from entry-level to power-holding, higher-paying leadership jobs.
- **Kin-keeping:** effort to build and maintain relationships between family members.
- **Public school:** maintained through public funds to educate children living in that community or district without cost to families.
- **Student debt:** a loan taken to attend college that has not yet been repaid.
- **Voucher:** supplied by the government or other public entity for families to use to offset the cost of a private school.

Activity: Helping College Students

As you are likely aware, the process of applying for and paying for a college education is difficult and complex in the United States. Watch the video "U.S. College Students Need Help" in figure 13.24 and consider how your experience might differ from students of different cultures, geographic areas, disability status, and other social locations.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 13.24. US College Students Need Help [YouTube Video]. This Vlog Brothers video talks about what they have learned about college students in their 10-year career making Crash Course videos. Transcript. "U.S. College Students Need Help" by vlogbrothers. License: Standard YouTube License.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the main points of this short video? What is your reaction to the video?
2. This video launched three channels. Choose one channel and explore it by reviewing the playlists and the video titles and watching one or more short videos. Describe what is featured on the channel and how it could help college students.
    1. How to College: Preview [YouTube Video]
    2. Study Hall [YouTube Video]
    3. An Introduction to Fast Guides [YouTube Video]
3. Do these videos consider college students who have caregiving responsibilities, such as family care? How might care work impact someone's college funding and application process?

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CHAPTER 14: MEANING AND PURPOSE

Learning Objectives

1. Examine meaning and purpose from a theoretical perspective.
2. Describe the relationship between family and meaning.
3. Describe how people create meaning and purpose in their family lives.
4. Distinguish between Westernized and Indigenous theories about what is needed in life, what is meaningful, and how people find meaning.
5. Describe how social structures limit and enable people to create meaning and social change.
6. Describe the ways that loss and trauma can be linked with meaning and purpose.
7. Apply concepts related to meaning and purpose to one's own observations and experiences.

14.1: Chapter Reading Guide

14.2: What Do We Mean by "Meaning"?

14.3: Purpose and Meaning- A Survey of 17 Countries

14.4: Lifespan Development and Creativity

14.5: Indigenous Perspectives on Family, Purpose, and Meaning

14.6: Generational Trauma and Resilience

14.7: Looking Ahead- Deb Haaland and Family Healing

14.8: Going Deeper

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14.1: Chapter Reading Guide

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Aimee Krouskop

What gives your life meaning? Do you feel as if you have a purpose? It turns out that many people both ordinary and expert, see family, kinship, love, and children as primary sources of meaning in their lives. In this chapter, we will circle back to the hierarchy of needs (HON) first discussed in Chapter 3 and look more deeply at Indigenous ways of creating meaning. We will learn about families who showed resilience and created meaning when facing traumatic acts of oppression. You'll also have a chance to take a "meaning in life" questionnaire to help you think about meaning and purpose in your own life.

The reading is designed to help you meet the following chapter objectives. Preview those to have an idea of where you are headed. You may also want to preview the key terms that follow. These terms will be bolded the first time they appear in the chapter. You can read the definitions here and also in the hyperlinks.

Key Terms Preview

- **Existential psychology:** an approach that focuses on the "whole" person and the major concerns of death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness.
- **Forced assimilation:** the process by which a religious or ethnic minority group is forced to give up their own identity by taking on the cultural characteristics of an established and generally larger community.
- **Generativity:** the concern for the future and one's own contribution to the next generation.
- **Genocide:** the deliberate destruction, in whole or in part, by a government or its agents of a racial, sexual, religious, tribal, or political minority. It can involve not only mass murder but also starvation, forced deportation, and political, economic, and biological subjugation.
- **Historical trauma:** cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma.
- **Generational trauma:** trauma that moves from one generation to the next, as experiences of parents affect the biological, social, mental, or emotional development of their children and sometimes also their grandchildren (also "intergenerational trauma" or "multigenerational trauma").
- **Meaning:** can include the emotional significance of an action or way of being; the intention or reason for doing something; something that we create and feel; closely linked to motivation.
- **Psychosocial model:** a framework that emphasizes our relationships and that society's expectations motivate much of our behavior and the importance of conscious thought.
- **Purpose:** can include the aim, goal, or intention of an action; a long-term guiding principle; the impact our life has on the world.

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14.2: What Do We Mean by “Meaning”?

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Matthew DeCarlo

Throughout this text we have discussed equity and inclusion through the lens of what families need. We’ve focused on the ways that social structures can facilitate or create barriers for families, based on the ways that social identities are constructed. Some of the needs we’ve discussed are material, such as food and shelter. We’ve looked at loving and connecting relationships and tangible feelings of belonging, representation as well as visual culture that affirms and supports families. This chapter will focus on something less definable: the feelings of meaning and purpose that individuals and families experience. We will also look at the structures and experiences that support or create barriers to families’ purpose and meaning.

Everyone has their own sense of meaning and purpose. One might describe meaning and purpose as being the same thing, while others may see them as different but related concepts. Each word is sometimes used to define the other—for example, this definition of meaning: “Meaning in life reflects the feeling that one’s existence has significance, purpose, and coherence” (Routledge & FioRito, 2021). Or this definition of purpose: “Purpose is the culmination of meaningful goals” (Miller, 2021).

Purposive action can be narrowly defined as exchanging one set of circumstances for a better one. Of course, this does not tell you *why* someone completed an action—just that you assume they did so for some reason. When we talk about purpose and action in this chapter, we are using a defining purpose as something that drives your spiritual, psychological, and social life.

As you read this chapter, consider the definitions above, as well as these bullet points.

Meaning can include:

- The emotional significance of an action or way of being
- The intention or reason for doing something
- Is something that we create and feel; it’s closely linked to motivation

Purpose can include:

- The aim, goal, or intention of an action
- A long-term guiding principle
- The impact our life has on the world

Activity: Meaning in Life Questionnaire

For a scientific look into your own sense of meaning and purpose in life and how it relates to your health, take a minute or two and complete the “meaning in life” questionnaire.

While there are many potential definitions for “meaning,” this questionnaire conceptualizes meaning as having two components: presence and search.

The “presence of meaning” subscale measures how fully respondents feel their lives are of meaning. Questions 1, 4, 5, 6, and 9 provide five scientific questions that probe the presence of meaning in your life. If you scored highly on questions 1, 4, 5, and 6, you perceive your life to be full of meaning. If you scored highly on question 9, you perceive your life to have less meaning.

According to a recent review of the literature, the presence of meaning is positively related to well-being, intrinsic religiosity, extraversion, and agreeableness and negatively related to anxiety and depression. Presence relates to personal growth, self-appraisals, and altruistic and spiritual behaviors (King & Hicks, 2021).

The other questions in the “meaning in life” questionnaire measure the search for meaning or how engaged and motivated respondents are in efforts to find meaning or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives. Questions 2, 3, 7, 8, and 10 explored your search for meaning, and if you scored highly on them, you are more engaged with finding meaning in your life.

The search for meaning does not always lead to positive outcomes. Research demonstrates that the search for meaning is associated with negative outcomes such as rumination, negative and fatalistic thoughts about the past and future, negative affect,

depression, and neuroticism. Nevertheless, people who report a high sense of meaning in life appear to be better off than others (King et al., 2016; Steger, 2012). According to King and Hicks (2021), higher meaning in life is associated with improved health outcomes as varied as cardiovascular disease, mortality, age-related cognitive decline, and risk for Alzheimer's disease, burnout, social appeal, psychological disorders, physical disability, and suicidal ideation (p. 564).

Meaning, Belonging, and Kinship

Where do meaning and purpose fit in the discussion of what families need? This section will introduce you to several ideas about meaning and purpose.

Where Does Meaning Fit in a Needs Hierarchy?

There is a well-known HON model designed by Abraham Maslow, but his work was inspired by his visit with the Blackfoot (Siksika) Indians in Canada in 1938. While Maslow's model was recorded, it was not as typical then for Indigenous communities to record and publicize their ideas in written form. So, let's start here with some of the foundational ideas about the needs of the Blackfoot people by re-examining the graphic in figure 14.1.

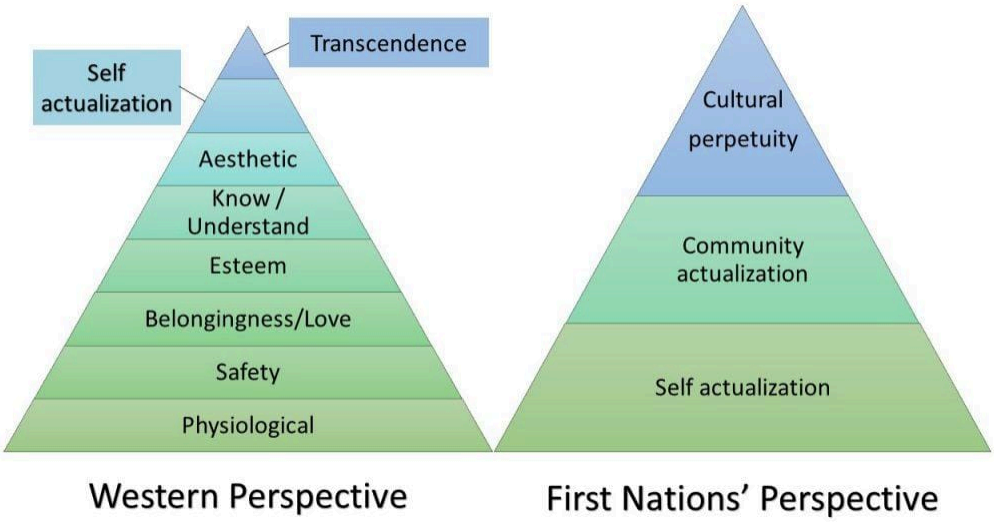


Figure 14.1. The graphic on the right, which represents the Blackfoot (a single tribe that is part of the First Nations in Canada) perspective about needs, is not actually a triangle but rather a tipi that reaches as high as the sky. Image description available. Image description. "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and First Nations' perspective." License: CC BY 4.0. Based on a slide created by Cindy Blackstock that appears in Maslow's Hierarchy Connected to Blackfoot Beliefs by Karen Lincoln Michel and Rethinking Learning by Barbara Bray.

Self-actualization, or the realization of one's potential and purpose, is important in part because it contributes to the community's overall actualization or fulfillment. The highest form that can be attained is cultural perpetuity, which connects kinship, generations, multiple dimensions of time, and meaning. Maslow's model puts self-actualization at the highest level, whereas in the Blackfoot thinking, self-actualization actually helps the community become its most connected and realized (Bray, 2019).

Cultural perpetuity has been called the "Breath of Life" by Gitskan scholar Cindy Blackstock, who said, "It's an understanding that you will be forgotten, but you have a part in ensuring that your people's important teachings live on" (Bray, 2019). Indigenous thinking emphasizes the multidimensional aspect of time and of generations.

The tipi visualization has been reimagined by Native American scholar and child welfare expert Terry Cross, who seeks to infuse Maslow's model with Indigenous thinking. He believes that a model that reflects the interdependence of human needs with cultural laws and values is more representative of Indigenous views than a hierarchical model (Blackstock, 2011). This model, figure 14.2, of nested circles reflects the ways that spirituality, relationships, connections, and self-actualization, all aspects of life that can give families meaning or purpose, are nested within one another (Blackstock, 2009).

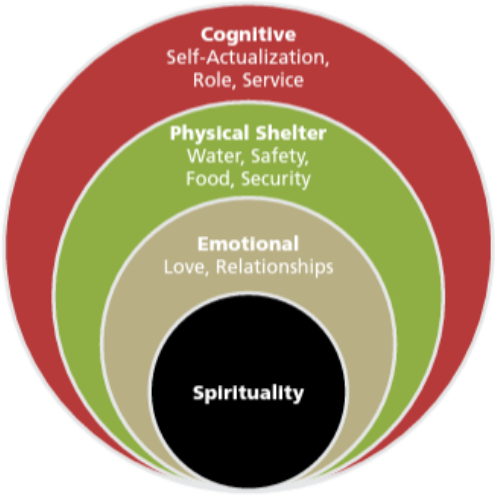


Figure 14.2. Native American scholar Cindy Blackstock interpreted Terry Cross's view of "Maslow through Indigenous Eyes" with this visualization. "Figure 6: Cross (2007) Maslow through Indigenous eyes" by Cindy Blackstock in When Everything Matters: Comparing the experiences of First Nations and Non-Aboriginal children removed from their families in Nova Scotia from 2003 to 2005 (p.37). License: Fair Use.

The HON model, however, shows that a person must meet one need first before achieving another, with self-actualization and transcendence only possible when other needs have been achieved first. Maslow's writings were reinterpreted by management consultants in the 1960s away from a ladder—on which people can move up and down and hold many rungs at a time—and toward a pyramid—a common hierarchical symbol in management and organizational practice with the CEO on top and workers on bottom. Unlike the textbooks that relied on this reinterpretation, if one engages with his original writings, "Maslow did not say that the HON is unidirectional, that achieving higher levels makes you a superior being, that once a need is satisfied it no longer affects behavior, or that it applies to all people in the same way (Maslow, 1943, 1954)" (Bridgman et al., 2021, p. 92). Over its life span as a theory, our culture's individualism and ethnocentrism have erased the communal, culturally responsive, and flexible elements of Maslow's framework.

Both Maslow's and the Blackfoot models show us that being human is not just about the functions of our physical bodies, or the attainment of material goods. They emphasize the value and importance of what we might call "meaning"—the ways we think about ourselves, the ways we contribute to our kinship groups and community, and how we are a part of future generations. As individuals and families, our purposes in life may vary widely—and the way we think about that purpose will vary as well. However, scholars agree that the intangibles of meaning and purpose, whichever words we may use, are not only a part of being human but also a fundamental need (Routledge & FioRito, 2021).

Finding Meaning

Maslow's HON also had roots in the humanistic psychology movement, which focuses on human potential and growth. **Existential** psychologists are deeply concerned with individuals and the conditions of each unique human life. **Existential psychology** differs significantly from humanistic psychology. However, in focusing on present existence and the concerns with death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness that are so often associated with the circumstances of our lives (Lundin, 1979). The difference can easily be seen in the titles of two influential books written by leading existential psychologists: *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl (1946/1992) and *Man's Search for Himself* by Rollo May (1953).

Both Viktor Frankl and Rollo May were immersed in existential thought and its application to psychology when they faced seemingly certain death. For Frankl, who was imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camps, death was expected. For May, who was confined to a sanitarium with tuberculosis, death was a very real possibility (and indeed, many died there). In this text, we will focus on Frankl's work.

In Focus: Love, Family, and Meaning

Watch the video in figure 14.3 about Frankl's main ideas from *Man's Search for Meaning*.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 14.3. Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl [Streaming Video]. This video will discuss three main ideas: "He who has a why to live with, can live with almost any how"; "Love is the highest goal to which a man can aspire"; and "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." Transcript. Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl by One Percent Better. License: Standard YouTube License.

As you watch this video, watch for this well-known quote about Frankl's wife, who died in a different camp (Frankl, 1992):

> I did not know whether my wife was alive, and I had no means of finding out but at the moment it ceased to matter. There was no need for me to know; nothing could touch the strength of my love, my thoughts, and the image of my beloved. Had I known then that my wife was dead, I think that I would still have given myself, undisturbed by that knowledge, to the contemplation of her image, and that my mental conversations with her would have been just as vivid and just as satisfying. "Set me like a seal upon thy heart; love is as strong as death."

Listen to other ways in which love, belonging, and family are considered to be a part of meaning in life. Ask yourself how family and belonging have or have not helped you to find meaning and purpose in life.

To explore the topics of familial death, grief, and meaning more deeply, use the podcast and questions in the "Grief and Meaning" activity in the "Going Deeper" section.

Contributions to Families' Well-Being

Purpose and meaning have also been linked to positive physical and mental health in undergraduates, older adults, adolescents, middle-aged adults, cancer patients, and African Americans. In a national study, African Americans who felt that their lives had meaning tended to have fewer depressive symptoms and a positive effect. This appeared to be independent of stress levels, although both income (higher) and gender (women) seemed to have the strongest positive effects (Park et al., 2020).

In this chapter, we will examine the ways in which scholars have studied purpose and meaning. We will look at "Westernized" views, those that have most often emerged and been emphasized in European countries, the United States, and Canada. We will examine Indigenous views related to meaning and purpose, the barriers to realizing meaning and purpose, and the ways that those barriers relate to defining what makes life most meaningful. We will highlight the connection of a meaningful life and kinship, family, and community.

Comprehension Self Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=1195#h5p-58

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14.3: Purpose and Meaning- A Survey of 17 Countries

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Nadine Wood

In this section we will look at survey data to define what purpose and meaning looks like to people from 17 industrialized countries, mostly that are part of the western world such as France, Germany, and the United States, or considered to be westernized, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

As you read, consider how two psychologists described meaning in The Journal of Positive Psychology in 2016. They describe these three aspects of meaning (Martela & Steger, 2016):

- Coherence is how events fit together. This is an understanding that things happen in your life for a reason. That doesn't necessarily mean you can fit new developments into your narrative the moment they happen, but you usually are able to do so afterward, so you have faith that you eventually will.
- Purpose is the existence of goals and aims. This is the belief that you are alive in order to do something. Think of purpose as your personal mission statement, such as "the purpose of my life is to share the secrets to happiness" or "I am here to spread love abundantly."
- Significance is life's inherent value. This is the sense that your life matters. If you have high levels of significance, you're confident that the world would be a tiny bit—or perhaps a lot—poorer if you didn't exist.

As you read, consider the aspects of coherence, purpose, and significance. See if you recognize how what gives people meaning may reflect one or more of these parts of meaning.

Studying Meaning in 17 Advanced Economies

Nineteen thousand adults from 17 advanced economies, including the United States, were surveyed by Pew Research Center in 2021, about what people value in life, and what gives their lives meaning. What do you think was the number one response across the majority (14) of these publics including the United States? It was "family" (Mitchell, 2021).

So here you are, reading a text about what families need, and specifically the chapter about the need for purpose and meaning in life. It turns out that many people in industrialized countries answer the question about what gives their lives meaning with what we are studying, "family."

In Focus: Bracelet Full of Meaning



Figure 14.4. This bracelet, which the owner wears every day, reminds her of her deep connection to China and to her daughters, who were born there. Photograph by Nadine Wood. License: CC BY 4.0.

I purchased a Jade bracelet in 2010 while on a Homeland Tour in China with my husband and our two daughters. Overall the bracelet symbolizes the deep connection our family will always have to China. The stone, carved into a circle, conveys the stable and unwavering love I have for our daughters. Over the years, the Jade has become scratched and dull on the outside yet remains smooth and shiny on the inside, which reminds me of the joys and challenges of parenting and being in a relationship. Because I wear this bracelet day and night, I can forget it is there. Then, the stone clangs on the counter or becomes warm in the dishwater, and the sensation alerts me—and reminds me.

Pew Research asked this open-ended question, "We're interested in exploring what it means to live a satisfying life. What aspects of your life do you currently find meaningful, fulfilling, or satisfying?" When individuals spoke about family, they elaborated by describing relationships with parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren. They mentioned spending quality time with relatives and taking pride in their accomplishments. In addition, they spoke of working to leave an improved world for their children (Mitchell, 2021).

Here are two detailed responses from individuals in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2021):

> Having someone I love in my life, around me every day, makes life a lot more satisfying! Also friends and family. Aside from that, I have a strong creative urge. For example...what really gets me going is thinking about the YouTube channel I plan on starting. I also create music, and I want to start writing fiction and possibly design an adventure game....I have anxiety that makes me hesitant to put my work out there, but I know that's what I want. I know that's the only thing that can really satisfy me....Anything I can do to get myself past that feeling of "I can't do it...it's not worth it...what's the point..." will lead me down deeply meaningful, fulfilling and satisfying avenues of creativity.
> —Male, 33

> Being comfortable and stable with basic needs (food, shelter, health care, and public education for my child) and a little extra (maybe going out to dinner or a vacation). Being fulfilled with experiences and personal relationships and not so much stuff. What makes this life worth living is good health, strong healthy relationships, being in awe of all the natural beauty in this world, learning new things daily and guiding my son into a life where he is a healthy, empathic, self-reliant, and loving adult. (And of course: cats! lol)
> —Female, 51

In the responses above, you can see that participants had the ability to respond with a wide range of answers, from which researchers extrapolated data that is more organized and easier to generalize.

You'll notice in the first quote that the 33-year-old male also highlighted that creativity was an important part of what gives his life meaning. Creativity is defined as "the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be

useful in solving problems…and entertaining ourselves and others (Franken, 2011).” Creativity is not one of the categories that the researchers identified. Perhaps they coded this man’s comment as “hobbies” or “freedom.” Theorists, however, identify creativity as a part of generativity, which will be discussed in the next section.

Activity: What Is Meaningful to You?

How would you answer the question used in the Pew Research Center Survey?

“What aspects of your life do you currently find meaningful, fulfilling, or satisfying?”

1. Respond to the question above in a narrative form.
    1. As you answer, try to be authentic to your own thoughts and feelings. Remember, the original respondents did not have access to the coding and categories that the researchers used to present the narrative information in a quantitative fashion, so write freely.
2. Trade responses with a classmate. After reading each other’s narratives and reviewing the topics listed here (View a Topic), discuss how your narratives fit into the topics.
    1. And what did you write about that does not fit into a survey topic?

Also ranked highly, as shown in figure 14.5, were the following categories:

- Friends
- Occupation
- Health
- Material well-being
- Society

While family, careers, material well-being, friends and health are all top sources of meaning, they vary in importance across publics surveyed

Ranked choice among 17 topics coded as part of what gives people meaning in life

	1st choice	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Australia	Family	Occupation	Friends	Material well-being	Society
New Zealand	Family	Occupation	Friends	Material well-being	Society
Sweden	Family	Occupation	Friends	Material well-being/Health	
France	Family	Occupation	Health	Material well-being	Friends
Greece	Family	Occupation	Health	Friends	Hobbies
Germany	Family	Occupation/Health		Material well-being/General Positive	
Canada	Family	Occupation	Material well-being	Friends	Society
Singapore	Family	Occupation	Society	Material well-being	Friends
Italy	Family/Occupation		Material well-being	Health	Friends
Netherlands	Family	Material well-being	Health	Friends	Occupation
Belgium	Family	Material well-being	Occupation	Health	Friends
Japan	Family	Material well-being	Occupation/Health		Hobbies
UK	Family	Friends	Hobbies	Occupation	Health
U.S.	Family	Friends	Material well-being	Occupation	Faith
Spain	Health	Material well-being	Occupation	Family	Society
South Korea	Material well-being	Health	Family	General Positive	Society/Freedom
Taiwan	Society	Material well-being	Family	Freedom	Hobbies

Note: Open-ended question. Rank reflects where the topic fell in a list of 17 sources of meaning that were coded. See Appendix A for more information.
Source: Spring 2021 Global Attitudes Survey. Q36.
“What Makes Life Meaningful? Views From 17 Advanced Economies”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 14.5. This table shows the 17 countries that participated in the survey and the order in which the majority of respondents in each country ranked what gives them meaning in life. “While Family, Careers, Material Well-Being, Friends and Health Are All Top Sources of Meaning, They Vary in Importance across Publics Surveyed” from “What Makes Life Meaningful? Views from 17 Advanced Economies” © Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. License: Pew Research Center’s Terms of Use.

Comparing the United States to Other Countries

Viewing figure 14.5, you can see similarities and differences amongst countries, including that family was the first choice for most countries, including the United States. When you look over to the second choice, however, it is evident that only the United States and the United Kingdom chose “friends,” while most other countries chose “material well-being” or “occupation,” both of which are more related to income.

Also noticeable in the chart is that the United States is the only country in which the majority of respondents included “faith” in the top five choices. In this survey, faith, spirituality, and religion were grouped together. “Faith” includes personal ways of finding meaning and worshiping, peace of mind, as well as organized religion, rites, and rituals. Fifteen percent of Americans mentioned spirituality, faith, or religion when saying what gives them meaning. The next highest response came from New Zealand, with 5% of respondents giving similar answers.

While spouses and romantic partners were not mentioned as frequently as family or children, they were mentioned the most by respondents from the United States compared to other countries, including an American woman who said of her husband, “He is thoughtful and supportive and gives me ground to stand on when everything else falls apart” (Pew Research Center, 2021). Nine percent of respondents from the United States included “partners” as giving life meaning.

You may be wondering about how people with differing social identities spoke about what was meaningful to them. Let’s look at a couple of the patterns that were found. Use your sociological imagination to compare and contrast broad societal patterns to what is meaningful to you in your own life.

Comparisons by Age

Respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 are most likely to mention friends and community as bringing meaning to their lives. In addition, those under 30 are more likely to consider jobs, education, and hobbies as important than older people.

While adults of all ages ranked family strongly, those aged 30 to 49 are the ones most likely to mention family. This is also the age when most people are likely to have children at home (OECD, 2022). Those older than 65 were more likely to mention “health” and “retirement” as meaningful in their lives.

Comparisons by Sex and Gender

Women were more likely than men to include family or children in their responses about meaning in life. This gender gap was highest in countries where family was ranked higher overall (New Zealand, Canada, and others) and lowest in countries that did not include family as frequently, such as South Korea, Singapore, and Japan. Women also mentioned their health more often than did men (Pew Research Center, 2021).

Comparisons by Socioeconomic Status

Education and income were both reported by the survey participants. Overall, people with higher levels of education and higher incomes were more likely to mention their family and career as meaning-makers. Service and civic engagement were linked to people with more education. Lastly, those with lower incomes were more likely to say that they had challenges in their lives related to finding meaning and purpose (Pew Research Center, 2021).

Comprehension Self Check

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14.4: Lifespan Development and Creativity

In addition to varying by country and culture, purpose and meaning changes based on your lifespan development, according to Westernized views. The **psychosocial model** gives us a guideline for the entire life span and suggests certain primary psychological and social concerns throughout life. The theory emphasizes our relationships and that society's expectations motivate much of our behavior and the importance of conscious thought. Let's look at the Erikson's lifespan model, which identifies developmental tasks that occur from infancy through the last stages of life. This model was developed by Erik Erikson, with his wife Joan, who also added a ninth stage to the model following her husband's death.

We will also examine views of creativity and spirituality as a part of purpose. You will meet Henry Louis Gates Jr., a literary critic, professor, historian, filmmaker, and the host of *Finding Your Roots,* in which celebrities examine their ancestral history. Not only can creativity be purposeful and joyful, but it also can be an avenue to cope with oppression or depression.

Lifespan Theory: Adolescence

For the purposes of discussing meaning and purpose, we will start by discussing adolescence. But if you would like a look at the full lifespan model, see the chart in Appendix C. Erikson believed that the primary psychosocial task of the fourth stage, adolescence, was establishing an identity. As formal operational thinking unfolds, bringing with it adolescent self-consciousness and the ability to reflect on one's own attributes and behaviors, teens often struggle with the question, "Who am I?" This includes questions regarding their appearance, vocational choices and career aspirations, education, relationships, sexuality, political and social views, personality, and interests. Erikson saw this as a period of uncertainty, confusion, exploration, experimentation, and learning regarding identity and one's life path. Erikson suggested that most adolescents experience psychological moratorium, where teens put on hold commitment to an identity while exploring their options. The culmination of this exploration is a more coherent view of oneself. Those who are unsuccessful at resolving this stage may either withdraw further into social isolation or become lost in the crowd. However, more recent research suggests that few leave the adolescent period with identity achievement and that for most of us, the process of identity formation continues all during the years of emerging and young adulthood (Côtè, 2006).

Lifespan Theory: Middle Adulthood

Here, we will focus on the seventh stage or middle adulthood. The Eriksons believed that **generativity** encompasses procreativity, productivity, creativity, and legacy (Erikson, 1950, 1982). This stage includes the generation of new beings, new ideas or creations, and lasting contributions, as well as self-generation concerned with further identity development. Erikson believed that the stage of generativity, which lasts from the 1940s to the 1960s, during which one established a family and career, was the longest of all the stages. Individuals in midlife are primarily concerned with leaving a positive legacy of themselves, and parenthood is the primary generative type. Much like other scientific theories and measurements, cultural beliefs drove which questions were asked and, thus, which answers were included in social theories. Parenthood and employment were viewed as potentially in conflict due to the obligations of each.

Beyond parenthood and working, Erikson also described generativity as being involved in the community, for example, providing mentoring, coaching, community service, or taking leadership in church or other community organizations. A sense of stagnation occurs when one is not active in generative matters; however, stagnation can motivate a person to redirect energies into more meaningful activities.

Demographic changes since the majority of Erikson's work was published include declining mortality, with older adults living both longer and healthier lives. Increasingly, older adults who have children and grandchildren are spending more time in the generative stage of caregiving (with grandchildren).

Creativity

Erikson defined the developmental task of generativity as one that included creativity. What do you think creativity is? Perhaps take a second and reflect on cultural monuments, architecture, artworks, music, theater, and literature. Compare the four paintings featured in collage in figure 14.6. Is one of these more creative than the other? If so, what makes one piece more creative than

the other?



Figure 14.6. “An artist imitates neither nature, other artists, nor himself. An artist creates” (Pearce, 1971). Creativity collage selected by Liz Pearce. License: CC BY 4.0. Adapted from “Dancing Couple in the Snow” by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, “Stela of Amenemhat and Hemet” by Unknown, “Alfred la Guigne” by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and “Who Is Sylvia? What Is She, That All the Swains Commend Her?” by Edwin Austin Abbey. Public domain.

There are many definitions of creativity, both scientific and non-scientific. Creativity includes:

- Generating original materials
- Solving problems using one’s own or others’ ideas
- Recognizing alternative solutions
- Designing activities that entertain others

Psychologists who study creativity largely agree on three components. First, creativity involves a great deal of divergent thinking, that is, the ability to look at things from different perspectives. Secondly, creativity involves a unique perspective or some element of originality. Finally, creativity must have functionality in that a creative work serves some function or some value. While the paintings display various degrees of originality and divergent thinking, their functionality may not be as transparent as other creative works, such as unique architectural designs.

Being creative is also an avenue to overcome depression and despair, which are conditions that can get in the way of finding life meaningful. Black families enslaved in the United States endured great suffering, including having their families torn apart. We know that family is one of the aspects of life that people around the world find meaningful. How did people who were enslaved continue to find meaning in life? One answer is provided via churches and religion, as illustrated in figure 14.7.



Figure 14.7. This church illustration is from 1882, but Black churches existed before then, even while slavery was still legal. "In a Negro Church" from "America Revisited: From the Bay of New York to the Gulf of Mexico, and from Lake Michigan to the Pacific" by George Augustus Sala in this collection. License: CC0 1.0.

While the enslavers thought that religion would help keep Black people subservient, it rather was a place for learning, development, and creativity (Gates, 2021):

> The Black church was the cultural cauldron that Black people created to combat a system designed to crush their spirit. Collectively and with enormous effort, they refused to allow that to happen. And the culture they created was sublime, awesome, majestic, lofty, glorious, and at all points subversive of the larger culture of enslavement that sought to destroy their humanity. The miracle of African American survival can be traced directly to the miraculous ways that our ancestors reinvented the religion that their "masters" thought would keep them subservient, Rather, that religion enabled them and their descendants to learn, to grow, to develop, to interpret and reinvent the world in which they were trapped.

Gates describes all of the creative arts that not only took place in the church but also those that centered the Black church life and experience: "music, dance, and song; rhetoric and oratory; poetry and prose; textual exegesis and interpretation; memorization, reading, and writing; the dramatic arts and scripting; call-and-response, signifying, and indirection; philosophizing and theorizing; and, of course, mastering all of 'the flowers of speech,'" as shown in figure 14.8 (Gates, 2021).



Figure 14.8. Singing, dancing, and writing lyrics and poems are all creative pursuits, as shown by this choir of a historically black college or university (HBCU). “Howard Gospel Choir” by Adam Fagen. License: CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

You’ve read several definitions of creativity and viewed some artworks in this short section. What is your viewpoint of what is creative?

Lifespan Theory: Late Adulthood

Erikson framed the last part of the lifespan with the developmental task of Integrity versus Despair. The value of life is negotiated during middle adulthood in the search for meaning and a purpose larger than yourself that will contribute to your legacy (i.e., Generativity). This final task comes down to whether you have built a life and constructed a self that is sufficient to withstand the disintegration of your physical body, the death of many of those you love, and your own impending death with dignity and grace.

Lifespan Theory: Elderly Adulthood

Joan Erikson proposed (from her own experiences and the notes created by Erik and her before his death) that in a ninth state, older adults revisit the previous eight stages and deal with the previous conflicts in new ways as they cope with the physical and social changes of growing old.

People tend to become more involved in prayer and religious activities as they age. This provides a social network as well as a belief system which can combat the fear of death. Religious activities provide a focus for volunteerism and other activities as well. For example, one elderly woman prides herself on knitting prayer shawls that are given to those who are sick. Another serves with the group responsible for keeping robes and linens clean and ready for communion.

The Eriksons found that those who successfully come to terms with these changes and adjustments in later life make headway toward gerotranscendence, a term coined by gerontologist Lars Tornstam to represent a greater awareness of one’s own life and connection to the universe, increased ties to the past, and a positive, transcendent, perspective about life (Tornstam, 1989).

Comprehension Self Check

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14.5: Indigenous Perspectives on Family, Purpose, and Meaning

Aimee Krouskop



Figure 14.9. Norval Morrisseau (1931 to 2007) was an Indigenous Canadian artist from the Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek First Nation. He titled this work Bear Father, Bear Sun and described it as "Bear gives knowledge to man; man gives knowledge to son," expressing themes of kinship and transformation among human-animal relations. Sky Woman by Ernest Smith (1936) on Wikipedia. License: Public Domain. Sky Woman by Ernest Smith (1936) on Wikipedia. License: Public Domain.

The previous sections of this chapter reviewed Western research, theory, and models of how humans develop and pursue meaning in their lives. Those frameworks focus on developing an *individual* sense of purpose and meaning and *applying it* to one's life, family, and community. Families and communities have a role in the way we develop our purpose and meaning, but the individual is at the center of that process.

What can we glean about purpose and meaning by looking at Indigenous perspectives? While there is great diversity among Indigenous peoples, there are also some commonalities in Indigenous worldviews and ways of being. Indigenous worldviews see the whole person (physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual) as interconnected to the land and all plant and animal life, as well as in relationship to others (family, communities, and other nations) (figure 14.9). This is called a holistic view, and it shapes the foundation of purpose and meaning for individuals among First Nations peoples.

Let's look at a couple of examples. The first perspective is from the Anishinaabek nation, a confederacy of nations in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada. The second is from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia.

In the next section, the authors refer to Turtle Island, which is the name the Lenape, Iroquois, Anishinaabe, and other Woodland Nations gave to North America. The name comes from the story about Sky Woman, who fell to Earth through a hole in the sky. The earth at this time was covered with water. The animals saw her predicament and tried to help her. Muskrat swam to the bottom of the ocean to collect dirt to create land. Turtle offered to carry this dirt on his back, and the collected dirt grew into the land we call North America. The term Turtle Island is now used today in North America by many Indigenous people, Indigenous rights activists, and environmental activists.

Stages of Life

The narrative in this section is structured around the First Nations cycle of life as understood from the traditional perspective of the Anishinaabe. The discussion is broken down into the eight stages of the life cycle and the seven phases of life and has been adapted from the 2010 Best Start Resource Centre document A Child Becomes Strong: Journeying Through Each Stage of the

Life Cycle.

The information provided in this section is in no way exhaustive; it is meant to act as a guide for the reader to navigate the common elements found in a diverse set of rich and complex cultural teachings that form a part of the larger First Nations world view.

Indigenous Life Cycle

First Peoples have traditionally utilized tools and knowledge from their natural environment to teach lessons within their communities. These cultural tools help First Peoples pass on essential teachings to their community members in a relevant and culturally interconnected way (Best Start Resource Centre, 2010). Many of these teachings are connected to or based upon an understanding of the four directions and the various medicine wheels discussed in this etextbook.

Across Turtle Island, the details of the medicine wheel and Four Directions teachings may differ, but often, the messages are similar (Four Directions Teachings, 2015), and we can connect them to the theme of the circle that is ever-present in the Indigenous worldview. The wheel or circle (the round shape) traditionally represents the following: Earth, sun and moon, seasons, the four directions, the four parts of the self: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual, the interconnectedness of people, and the cycle of life (Best Start Resource Centre, 2010).

Within the framework of the circle, all elements connect with and relate to one another. For this discussion, we will specifically focus on the cycle of life, in particular, the eight stages of the cycle of life and the seven phases of life embedded in it. It is important to note that the eight stages of the life cycle are different from the seven phases of life as understood by First Nations peoples, although these stages and phases often overlap. The duration of the eight stages of life is more defined, while the seven phases of life are less uniform in length and timing and open to greater interpretation by the individual (Best Start Resource Centre, 2010).

The Eight Stages of the Life Cycle

The eight stages of the life cycle are infant, toddler, child, youth, young adult, parent, grandparent, and elder/traditional teacher. For each stage, there are teachings about healthy development, traditional milestones, and the role that a person has within their family and community (Best Start Resource Centre, 2010).

The Seven Phases of Life

The seven phases of life differ from the eight stages in that they specifically focus on the spiritual journey of a person (Best Start Resource Centre, 2010). Each of these phases emphasizes the journey of self-discovery and fulfilling one's life purpose within an Indigenous framework. These phases often overlap. It is not uncommon for a person to enter or exit one of these phases at a completely different time than a family member or peer of the same age.

The seven phases of life are the good life, the fast life, the wandering and wondering life, the stages of truth, planting and planning, doing, and the elder and giving back life, as shown in the interactive activity below (Best Start Resource Centre, 2010).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=1201#h5p-61

Meaning, Purpose, and Community

Take a few minutes to click on the individual stages and phases in the interactive life cycle wheel (figure 14.10). There, you can see descriptions of the roles, responsibilities, and traditions associated with them. For example (Best Start Resource Centre, 2010; Four Directions Teachings, 2015):

> The Fast Life phase spans from ages 7 to 14. During this period a child practicing traditional ways may work toward preparing for a rite of passage at the time of puberty.
>
> These ceremonies may take many forms for both men and women. Fasting is a common component of these rites. Men will care for the boys and women will care for the girls during these celebrations of entry into adulthood. These

ceremonies help youth build confidence and foster a strong sense of identity and self-esteem.

During this time youth also learn about their roles and responsibilities as men and women in their communities. After their rite of passage, they are introduced back to their communities and families as young men and young women.

Each set of roles, responsibilities, and traditions refers to ways that individuals are asked to live and grow as integrally part of their community. As they practice traditional ways such as preparing for a rite of passage ceremony with fasting or being cared for by the people in their community, they are living their purpose in meaningful ways.

Strong Purpose

Another way to understand purpose and meaning from a First Nations perspective comes from Australia. Members of Headspace, a mental health consortium, have provided some resources that express how purpose is acknowledged among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

In Focus: What Is Strong Purpose

Having a strong purpose gives you the direction, drive, and motivation to achieve what you want from your life. This might include your short- and long-term goals or creating your lived story in a way that people will remember good ways for years to come. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples might refer to this as following your dreams.

A strong purpose will help you feel like there's meaning in your life and in the challenges you may face. Your purpose may change from time to time, and that is OK. When it does, think of what you have learnt on your journey so far and how you may be able to use this on your new path. We are collective peoples, and we naturally feel good when we feel like we are adding positively to the lives of others. Think about how your purpose and goals might bring value to your family, your community, your spirit, your identity, your country, or Mother Earth.

Chasing a Strong Purpose

You choose what your purpose is. You might have a sense of purpose that has been passed to you through your ancestral kinship connection and totem relationships or spiritual or religious influences and that's great. But if you aren't aware of any of these that is OK too. You can determine your own purpose from scratch.

How to Set a Strong Purpose

You are going to have to figure out how you want to fulfill your strong purpose. It can be a strong purpose with culture, school, work, or relationships.

Setting goals is a great way to start building a sense of purpose. By setting, striving for and achieving goals, you are dreaming your future each and every day. This will help keep your spirit and mind strong and help your overall well-being. How deadly is that!

What Can Impact Your Strong Purpose

Achieving your purpose requires commitment, energy, and attention. Think of it like a car—it only gets to a destination when it's driven there. Achieving your purpose and achieving your goals is similar—you need to drive it. For example, sitting on the couch all day, taking drugs, running amuck, and spending too much time on social media will all make achieving your strong purpose more difficult. You may still get there, but the journey will be more difficult than it had to be.

Whenever something doesn't work the way you thought it would, take a moment to reflect on it and learn. Then keep on pushing forward with that new knowledge—there's no need to fear failure with that mindset.

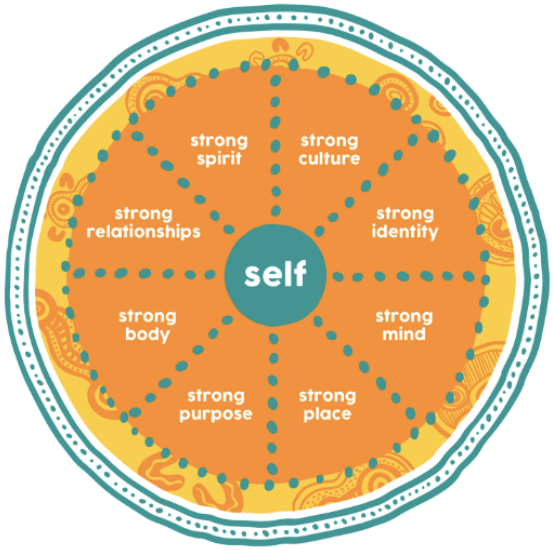


Figure 14.10. This well-being wheel was developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health professionals. "Well-Being Wheel" from "Strong Purpose" © Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation Ltd. License: Headspace Terms and Conditions. The well-being wheel is a derivative from the original work.

This resource has been developed in partnership with the Headspace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Reference Group (Womenjeka Reference Group), Marumali Consultations, the Headspace National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, and Headspace National (Gee et al., 2014).

Consider the well-being wheel in figure 14.10. "Strong purpose" is presented as a spoke along with several other key factors related to well-being, such as "strong identity," "strong culture," "strong relationships," and "strong mind." For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who hold this perspective, purpose is part of a whole set of experiences important to a strong sense of self and quality of life.

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14.6: Generational Trauma and Resilience

Aimee Krouskop

Our sense of purpose and meaning can become amplified as a result of loss. For example, many of us have experienced the death of a loved one. After they are gone, we can gain a more immediate, broader understanding of what that person means to us. Often, we also receive sharper insights regarding the purpose of that relationship. We can also see meaning and purpose expand with loss if we examine family groups and their communities.

This section introduces meaning and purpose at the intersection of loss and equity. In Chapter 2, we discussed how understanding the diversity of family experiences includes developing awareness of the disproportionate ways they experience social problems. In addition, it includes paying attention to themes of social justice. Those themes include the unequal access families have to opportunity, care, and rights or the current and historical persecution experienced by groups.

For example, we discussed humans' ability to create meaning while in life-threatening circumstances, as was acknowledged by existential psychology. Victor Frankl observed that prisoners who survived Auschwitz found ways of transcending their day-to-day survival. They were able to find meaning and purpose in life by maintaining a future goal, acknowledging their capacity to change themselves, and finding an ultimate purpose in loving others. Enslaved Black people fostered spirituality, creativity, and purpose to survive a system that, among other horrors, was designed to crush their spirit to create a compliant workforce. Through religion, gathering in churches, and a myriad of creative arts, they were able to create meaning and purpose as a part of their lives.

The stories below explore the similar human capacity to amplify a sense of meaning and purpose amidst severe loss. We'll look specifically at experiences expressed by two Indigenous people in the United States. The first is the experience of Ku Stevens, a member of the Yerington Paiute Tribe of Nevada. The second is the experience of Marie Wilcox, a member of the Wukchumni tribe, native to California.

Indigenous peoples around the world have experienced devastation in the form of discrimination, racism, oppression, displacement from their lands, dissolution of their communities, and efforts to erase their cultures. These are all components of **genocide**, the deliberate destruction, in whole or in part, by a government or its agents of a racial, sexual, religious, tribal, or political minority. It can involve not only mass murder but also starvation, forced deportation, and political, economic, and biological subjugation (Jones, 2006).

The wounding from these experiences exists across generations and is acknowledged in a number of ways. Dr. Maria Yellowhorse Braveheart writes about **historical trauma** and defines it as the "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma" (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1995). Historical trauma is the result of the tragic collective experiences of a community or generation. Examples are genocide, forced relocation, loss of spiritual practices, language, and culture, land dispossession, economic hardship, and war.

Related to historical trauma, **generational trauma** (also called transgenerational or multigenerational trauma) is also trauma that moves from one generation to the next. This refers to the *way* that trauma is passed on within families. Research shows that traumatic experiences of parents affect the biological, social, mental, or emotional development of their children, sometimes also their grandchildren through the ways they raise and relate to their children. Research also points to ways in which generational trauma is related to how certain genes are expressed in future generations (DeAngelis, 2019).

In each of their stories, Ku Stevens and Marie Wilcox share the purpose and meaning that have emerged for them as a response to genocidal loss. They are also stories of survival and resilience among the backdrop of historical and generational trauma.

> *Information detailed here may stir up unpleasant feelings or thoughts. The Indian Residential School Survivors Society encourages you to take time to care for your mental and emotional well-being. Please contact the Indian Residential School Survivors Society toll-free at 1-800-721-0066 or their 24-hour crisis line at 1-866-925-4419 if you want emotional support or assistance.*

Remembrance Run



Figure 14.11. Kutoven (Ku) Stevens carries a staff during a run with Peace and Dignity Journey, an Indigenous and First Nation spiritual movement committed to the preservation of Native American culture. Video screenshot of the film *Remaining Native*" © SCHH Productions. Used with permission.

Ku (short for Kutoven) Stevens (figure 14.11) is a cross-country runner and a member of the Yerington Paiute Tribe of Nevada. Northern Paiute people call themselves *Numu*, which means human being in their language (Yerington Paiute Tribe, 2023). Ku has won two Nevada Gatorade state athlete of the year awards. In 2021, he became state champion and the fastest high school cross-country runner in all of Nevada. In 2022, he accepted an offer to join the track and cross-country teams at the University of Oregon (Streeter, 2021).

Ku's inspiration for running comes from the story and struggle of his paternal great-grandfather, Frank Quinn. In the early 1900s, when Quinn was seven or eight years old, he was forced to leave his parents' home and attend Stewart Indian School, an American Indian boarding school. Also called residential schools, more than 400 government-funded and often church-run boarding schools like Stewart existed across the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. They were designed to strip Native Americans of their cultural heritage and indoctrinate them with the cultural values of White Americans (Streeter, 2021; Newland, 2022). The boarding school system also coincided with the removal of many tribes from their ancestral lands.

Watch this pair of videos that tell the experiences of Native Americans who were sent to residential schools in the United States. The first is "Taken from Their Families" (figure 14.12), and the second is "The U.S. Government's Education of Native American Children" (figure 14.13).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=1203#h5p-63

Figure 14.12. Taken from Their Families [Streaming Video]. Transcript. "Taken from Their Families" © PBS. All Rights Reserved.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=1203#h5p-64

Figure 14.13. The U.S. Government's Education of Native American Children [Streaming Video] In this video and the one above, Native American survivors of U.S. government-run boarding tell their stories of what it was like for them to be taken from their families, brought into the schools, and prevented from expressing their culture. The boarding school system was designed to de-indigenize Native American children. It had a lasting impact and damaged families. Transcript. "The U.S. Government's Education of Native American Children" © PBS. All Rights Reserved.

Often, Indigenous children arrived at the schools after being directly abducted by government agents. Congress had also authorized the Secretary of the Interior to withhold food rations from Indigenous families who did not release their children to the schools. Children were sent hundreds of miles away and beaten, starved, placed in solitary confinement, or otherwise abused

when they spoke their native languages or resisted rules and treatment in the schools.

Stewart Indian School was open between 1890 and 1980, and it operated as other boarding schools did. Like many other abducted students, Ku's great-grandfather, Frank Quinn, decided to escape Stewart Indian School and run home. After two failed attempts, he finally managed to navigate 50 miles of desert, returning to his reservation and family.

Inspired by his great-grandfather's story, in 2021, Ku and a group of about 50 others ran for two days from Stewart to the reservation following the path Frank took as an 8-year-old when he escaped from the school. Watch this trailer for the film *Remaining Native* (figure 14.14) for more of Ku's story. As you do, what details can you identify about Ku's inspiration for his run?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/contempfamilies2e/?p=1203#oembed-1

https://vimeo.com/814327610/b93e863221

Figure 14.14. trailer [Streaming Video] for *Remaining Native*. This preview of the film *Remaining Native* tells the story of a Ku Stevens who, through his running, honors the legacy of his great-grandfather and thousands of others who attended, escaped, and never made it home from Indian Boarding schools. Transcript. Video trailer of the film *Remaining Native*" © SCHH Productions.

The Indian boarding schools present an example of one of the most prevalent causes of historical and transgenerational trauma: forced assimilation. **Forced assimilation** is the process by which a religious or ethnic minority group is forced to give up their own identity by taking on the cultural characteristics of an established and generally larger community.

In the video, Ku shares that: "Native Americans were sent to boarding schools to die....If you didn't die physically, you would come out of the school broken." The process of forced assimilation through the boarding school system was, in essence, a spiritual and emotional breaking of young people and a breaking of intact communities. As Ku expresses, devastatingly, the boarding school system also meant a physical death for many young Native Americans. A cemetery sits near the Stewart School. Its graves are said to hold the remains of students who died there (Stewart Indian School, n.d.; Streeter, 2021).

In Canada, bodies, unmarked graves, and potential burial sites have been identified near residential school sites since the 1970s. In 2021, authorities began a renewed and more dedicated search and discovery of graves in their First Nations boarding schools. We now know that between 3,200 and 6,000 students died while attending the Canadian Indian residential school system (Tasker, 2015; Smith, 2015; Moran, 2020).

Soon after, the U.S. Department of the Interior began a study of U.S. burial sites near American Indian boarding schools. A 2022 report by the U.S. Department of the Interior expanded the original count of U.S. residential schools to more than 400, with at least 50 burial sites and at least 500 deaths of children among them (Newland, 2022).

The unearthing of this painful history furthered Ku's inspiration to commemorate those who suffered from the boarding school system (Sagrero, 2022).

Ku also hosts a 50-mile "Remembrance Run" to honor his great-grandfather and all Native American children who survived American Indian boarding schools and to remember those who never came home. Listen to this podcast (figure 14.15), where Ku shares his motivation and experience with the Remembrance Run.

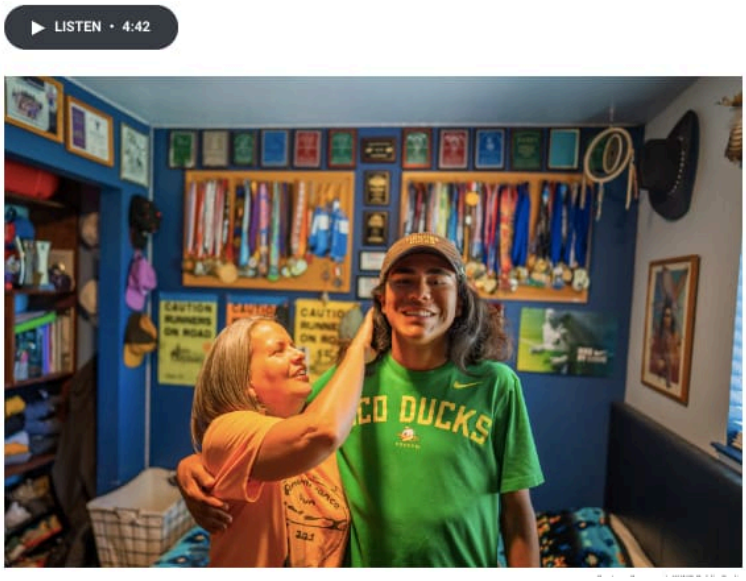


Figure 14.15. Yerington Teen and Family Organized Run to Remember Survivors, Victims of Indian Boarding Schools [Podcast]. In this podcast, Ku Stevens talks about his inspiration to organize a 50-mile run honoring the survivors and victims of the Stewart Indian School. "Yerington Teen and Family Organized Run to Remember Survivors, Victims of Indian Boarding Schools" © KUNR Public Radio. License: Used with permission.

What do you hear from Ku about the purpose and meaning he holds with his running?

> Because I'm Native, I'm a descendant of my great-grandpa. It means a lot for my dad just to see what it was like, to understand what it was like to be that scared and to be that alone, to not have the typical resources that somebody would have on a trip like that.
>
> I'm able to represent my people, and one of the best ways I know how, which is through running. So to be able to combine two things that I'm very passionate about, which is running and activism for my people, I'm able to really make a difference and an impact in a way that I could see, in a way that other people can understand, and in a way that I feel like is reaching a lot of people's hearts, which is ultimately what the goal is.

Keeping Language Alive

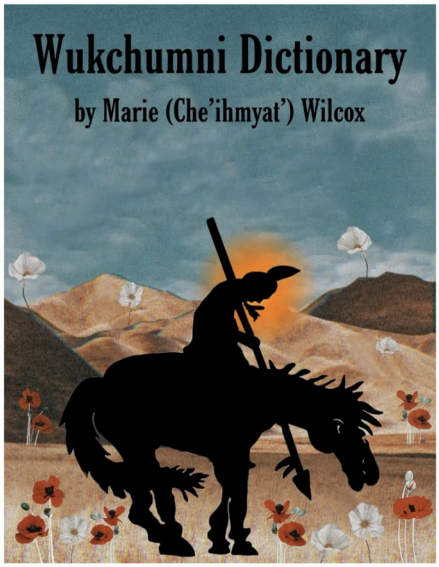


Figure 14.16. The dictionary of Wukchumni language created by Marie (Che'ihmyat') Wilcox (Seelye, 2021). Cover of *The Dictionary of Wukchumni Language* by Marie (Che'ihmyat') Wilcox, *The New York Time*s. License: Fair Use.

Marie (Che'ihmyat') Wilcox was a member of the Wukchumni tribe, a small community that is part of the larger Yokut Tribe native to Central California. Before European contact, the Yokut people reached 50,000 members, but today, less than 200 identify as Yokut (Brown, n.d.; Mineral King Preservation Society, n.d.).

Marie resided on the Tule River Reservation, and before she died in 2021, she was the last fluent speaker of the Wukchumni language. A couple of decades before her death, she commenced work on a Wukchumni dictionary to support the revitalization of her tribe's language (figure 14.16). This work was also a tribute to her grandmother, who took care of her and spoke the language. *The New York Time*s shared part of her story (Seelye, 2021):

> (Ms. Wilcox) started writing down words in Wukchumni as she remembered them in the late 1990s, scrawling on the backs of envelopes and slips of paper. Then she started typing them into an old boxy computer. Soon she was getting up early to devote her day to gathering words and working into the night.

Ms. Wilcox also recorded the words in her dictionary to capture their pronunciation and traveled to conferences throughout California to meet with other tribes who struggle with language loss (Seelye, 2021).

As we mentioned earlier, one of the strategies for forcibly assimilating Indigenous children at the boarding schools was to forbid them from speaking their own languages. The 2022 Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report documents that federal American Indian boarding schools were "designed to separate a child from his reservation and family, strip him of his tribal lore and mores, force the complete abandonment of his native language, and prepare him for never again returning to his people" (Newland, 2022, p. 51). The report quotes a communication to the Secretary of the Interior in 1886 that tells more of their strategies for assimilation (Newland, 2022, p. 54):

> No Indian is spoken[:] ...There is not an Indian pupil whose tuition and maintenance is paid for by the United States Government who is permitted to study any other language than our own vernacular—the language of the greatest, most powerful, and enterprising nationalities beneath the sun.

For Native American families, even as the boarding schools began to close, they still feared that teaching their children their languages would cause suffering for them (Lutz, 2007). Indigenous languages in the United States have been in decline for decades. Sixty-five are extinct, and 75 are near extinction, with only a few older speakers left (Sparks, n.d.).

Watch the video about Marie, called "Marie's Dictionary," in figure 14.17. As you watch, consider: What expressions of purpose and meaning do you notice? What purpose and meaning does Marie experience from creating the dictionary?

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Figure 14.17. Marie's Dictionary [Streaming Video]. This video tells the story of Marie Wilcox, the last fluent speaker of the Wukchumni language, and the dictionary she created in an effort to keep her language alive. Transcript. "Marie's Dictionary" © Global Oneness Project. License: Standard YouTube License.

Language, Identity, and Family

Language is important to families and their communities because they are the vehicle for cultural expression and heritage. In addition, languages often convey knowledge about life and the natural world known by communities that can only be expressed in their own language.

Inspiration for language revitalization spans generations in Indian Country. Ricky Nelson, also known as N8V ACE, is a Diné (Navajo) rap artist originally from Red Mesa, Arizona. He calls his music "cultural rap." His song "Native Rap" features him rapping in Diné. In an interview, he describes that his music "could be used as a tool to inspire the youth to use our Diné language." Watch the video in figure 14.18. In what ways do you hear N8V ACE expressing his identity? Why do you think it is important to

him?

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

Figure 14.18. Native Rap [Streaming Video]. N8V ACE, a Diné (Navajo) musician, performs his song "Native Rap" in his Diné language. His work is about "...encouraging people to be proud of who they are (especially the youth), to learn about culture/heritage, to keep tradition alive, and to preserve Native languages." (Anon. n.d.) Transcript. "Native Rap" © N8V ACE. License: Standard YouTube License.

The producers of "Marie's Dictionary" explain some more (Global Oneness Project, 2020):

- Oral storytelling has been a part of the human experience for thousands of years, providing a way for language to be remembered without documentation...
- "The world stands to lose an important part of the sum of human knowledge whenever a language stops being used. Just as the human species is putting itself in danger through the destruction of species diversity, so might we be in danger from the destruction of the diversity of knowledge systems," wrote Indigenous language revitalization advocate and linguist Leanne Hinton.
- ...Cultural historian Larry Swalley from the Lakota tribe said, "The language, the whole culture of the Lakota, comes from the song of our heartbeat. It's not something that can quickly be put into words. It's a feeling, it's a prayer, it's a thought, it's an emotion—all of these things are in the language."

Comprehension Self Check

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14.7: Looking Ahead- Deb Haaland and Family Healing

Aimee Krouskop

The meaning and purpose that we experience as individuals, families, and communities are always framed by the social structures and circumstances within which we live. As painful events of loss can expand our sense of meaning and purpose, they also give direction for whole societies. Let's look at some ways that social structures are shifting in response to those painful histories.

Deb Haaland

Perhaps one of the most visible indicators that U.S. society is shifting in its acknowledgment of genocide against Native Americans is Deb Haaland (figure 14.19). In 2020, Deb Haaland made history when she became the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary. She is a member of the Pueblo of Laguna, and as the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, she oversees federal policies involving the 574 federally recognized tribal nations as well as the national parks and public lands.



Figure 14.19. Secretary Deb Haaland speaks at Yellowstone National Park. "Secretary Deb Haaland" © Yellowstone National Park on Flickr. Public domain.

Megan Hill, a citizen of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Senior Director of the Project on Indigenous Governance and Development at the Harvard Kennedy School tells more about the occasion (Mineo, 2021):

> I heard a collective cheer across Indian Country when Rep. Deb Haaland was tapped to lead the U.S. Department of the Interior by then-President-elect Biden. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were alive with posts celebrating the announcement, highlighting her groundbreaking career of service and leadership, filled with "firsts." But, mostly, the cheers were of collective honor: She is one of our own. As a citizen of Laguna Pueblo, her success shines light on and gives voice to Natives across the country.

On the one hand, Deb Haaland's appointment as Secretary represents the resiliency, survivance, and fortitude expressed by Indigenous communities since settlers arrived on their lands. For many, it also represents some steps toward societal healing. As the secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Secretary Haaland is also in charge of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a marked shift from the leadership that had carried racist and colonial belief systems for centuries.

While there is much more to be done, Secretary Haaland's appointment coincides with some other remarkable developments in the human rights, acknowledgment, and well-being of Indigenous peoples of North America. For example, in 2022, U.S. Department of the Interior officials commenced a year-long tour that invites former boarding school students from Native American tribes, Alaskan Native villages, and Native Hawaiian communities to share their stories as part of a permanent oral

history collection. Secretary Haaland shared a purpose of this initiative: “It is my priority to not only give voice to the survivors and descendants of federal American Indian boarding school policies but also to address the lasting legacies of these policies so Indigenous peoples can continue to grow and heal” (Fonseca, 2022). In 2023 the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) launched a database that allows Native Americans to search for information on relatives who attended American Indian boarding schools.

Family Healing

What has initiated the better acknowledgment of the experiences of Indigenous people we see today? In great part, it has been the work of Indigenous-led organizations and many decades of Indigenous-led activism working toward recognition, resistance, and decolonization. The stories of Ku Stevens and Marie Wilcox also point to changes that are initiated within Indigenous families and their communities. Ku was inspired by the residential school experience of his great-grandfather but also witnessed how the illumination of those experiences impacted his father. Reflecting on the value of the Wukchumni language dictionary, Ms. Wilcox’s daughter shared that: “Learning this language has brought the family closer together....Mom inspired people to want to learn” (Seelye, 2021).

Some are choosing to share the very difficult stories of assimilation, abuse, and deaths that contribute to their lived experiences. For example, elders are speaking more readily about their experiences in residential schools as they understand how sharing their stories contributes to the healing of younger people in their communities. It’s a way to break intergenerational trauma by bringing their stories to light (Krouskop, 2020).

Societal shifts support elders in this sharing. The stigmatization that has long been associated with mental health struggles and with receiving counseling help is waning. Also, the exclusive use of Western approaches to healing from historical and generational trauma is under scrutiny. There’s a wider acknowledgment that Indigenous healing instead needs to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and wisdom. Part of that wisdom is the value of healing in the community and with families in focus. Inherent to their communal nature, those healing practices are also interdisciplinary. One community member may diagnose an individual’s spiritual health. Another may prepare herbal remedies, while others may prepare a ceremony to support healing (Joseph, 2022).

For example, the Union of Ontario Indians has published a booklet titled “How Do We Heal?” It’s a community wellness plan that addresses the impacts of the Canadian Indian residential school system. The author, Dr. Brenda M. Restoule, points to the value of learning and teaching about the histories specific to each nation, including how they are connected to land, water, animals, and plants. It’s a way for communities to work together as part of the healing process, finding common ground in their experiences, which fosters a sense of family and community pride, trust, and hope. Here’s part of her account (Restoule, 2013, p. 7):

> For some families and communities holding ceremonies and memorials to recognize and acknowledge the survivors of the Indian Residential Schools has had a powerful and healing effect for the entire community. Other types of cultural practices that support healthy grieving include ceremonies for feasting the ancestors, memorial feasts for family and community members who have passed on and teachings on spirit journeys, to name a few.
>
> ...Revitalization of culture can be found in the practice of cultural activities and ceremonies throughout the community; activities such as cultural practices, cultural ceremonies and reconnection to land, water, animals, and plants are central to healing from intergenerational trauma. Unlike non-First Nation-based treatment methods, cultural practices and ceremonies are built upon the premise of strength and resiliency.
>
> When healing methods begin from the point of believing in the resiliency of the Anishinabek people this promotes the belief that we have the power to become well, the power to take care of ourselves and the power to create lasting change. In essence, resiliency promotes power and control; the very pillars necessary to move beyond trauma and to heal.

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14.8: Going Deeper

Elizabeth B. Pearce and Aimee Krouskop

Now that you have done some thinking about meaning, purpose, and families, this section has some resources for you.

First, there are some resources that the authors used but could not fit into the chapter. If there was something that really piqued your interest and made you want to learn more, it may be listed in this table. This is also a resource for students who may have an assignment to research a particular topic or who need to identify a topic for a final project. Scan through "Want to Learn More?" if you are interested.

Next, you will see a set of reflective questions. You may be assigned these questions as a chapter review, or perhaps you will be using them as discussion questions in class. These questions are designed to help you apply the chapter concepts, develop your sociological imagination, reflect, and use an equity lens. Look over the "Reflective Questions" if you'd like to explore your own thinking more thoroughly.

After that, you will see the same list of key terms that appeared at the start of the chapter. They may help you with your additional exploration or research.

Finally, some chapters include activities that the instructor may use in the classroom.

Want to Learn More?

- As discussed throughout this chapter, there are many perspectives on purpose and meaning in people's lives. Here is a short, curated list of videos that explore various perspectives of meaning in life:
  - The True Meaning of Life [Streaming Video]
  - IKIGAI: A Japanese Philosophy for Finding Purpose [Streaming Video]
  - Meaning of Life: Jim Carrey Motivational Video [Streaming Video]
  - Is Life Meaningless? And Other Absurd Questions [Streaming Video]
  - The Meaning of Life [Streaming Video]
  - The Psychology of Motivation: Build Purpose, Respect Contributions, Give Credit [Streaming Video]
- For more on what makes life meaningful, review the entire Pew Research Center Study *What Makes Life Meaningful? Views From 17 Advanced Economies* here. To use the related interactive tool, click here.
- Read the 2010 Best Start Resource Centre document A Child Becomes Strong: Journeying Through Each Stage of the Life Cycle referenced in the "Stages of Life" section.
- To learn more about the forced boarding schools in the United States, read "Thousands of Indigenous Children Perished in 'Genocide Boarding Schools.'"
- To learn more about the importance of maintaining and revitalizing Indigenous languages, read "Language Is Land, Land Is Language: The Importance of Indigenous Languages."
- To learn more about the experiences of First Nations people who are healing from residential schools, read and watch "'They Tried to Extinguish Us': Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Elder Shares Healing from Residential School."
- For more information on Ms. Wilcox's dictionary and the revitalization of the Wukchumni and other languages, read this page with videos from *Emergence Magazine*.

Reflective Questions

1. There are several definitions of meaning and purpose in this chapter. Using one or more of those definitions as a foundation, write your own definition of meaning and purpose.
2. You answered the "meaning in life" questionnaire in the first section of the chapter. Reflect on what your response means to you. Why do you think that you scored this response? What experiences in your life have contributed?
3. How does meaning relate to family life?
4. Choose one of the following topics: creativity, religion, or spirituality. Discuss how it relates to purpose and meaning in family life.
5. Reflect on strong purpose. Can you apply this concept to your own experiences or observations?

6. How are loss, trauma, and meaning related?
7. How do social structures affect meaning and purpose?

Key Terms

- **Existential psychology:** an approach that focuses on the "whole" person and the major concerns of death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness.
- **Forced assimilation:** the process by which a religious or ethnic minority group is forced to give up their own identity by taking on the cultural characteristics of an established and generally larger community.
- **Generativity:** the concern for the future and one's own contribution to the next generation.
- **Genocide:** the deliberate destruction, in whole or in part, by a government or its agents of a racial, sexual, religious, tribal, or political minority. It can involve not only mass murder but also starvation, forced deportation, and political, economic, and biological subjugation.
- **Historical trauma:** cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma.
- **Generational trauma:** trauma that moves from one generation to the next, as experiences of parents affect the biological, social, mental, or emotional development of their children and sometimes also their grandchildren (also "intergenerational trauma" or "multigenerational trauma").
- **Meaning:** can include the emotional significance of an action or way of being; the intention or reason for doing something; something that we create and feel; closely linked to motivation.
- **Psychosocial model:** a framework that emphasizes our relationships and that society's expectations motivate much of our behavior and the importance of conscious thought.
- **Purpose:** can include the aim, goal, or intention of an action; a long-term guiding principle; the impact our life has on the world.

Activity: Grief and Meaning

[content warning: this activity contains mention of suicide]

Anderson Cooper, a broadcast journalist born in 1967, lost his father to heart disease when he was 10 years old. When he was 21 years old, his only sibling died by suicide. Then in 2019, when Anderson was in his early 50s, his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt, died. That was when Anderson started a new journey of recognizing and dealing more deeply with his grief over all of his familial loss.

Take a few minutes to explore Anderson's podcast, and to review the summaries of these three episodes:

- Mama Shu: Turning Loss into Love (28 minutes)
- Revisiting Stephen Colbert: Grateful for Grief (52 minutes)
- Love, Loss, and Parenting (36 minutes)

Choose **one** of the three episodes to listen to and then answer the questions.

You can listen to the podcast by clicking the play button on the CNN website or by searching for the episode on your preferred podcast application like Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Discussion Questions

1. Consider Anderson Cooper's perspective along with the podcast guests. How do the familial roles that the podcasters discussed (child, parent, sibling, and others) impact their relationship with grief?
2. Give examples of the ways that Anderson and his guests connected grief and meaning in their lives.
3. In what ways do you connect with what the speakers share on the podcast episode?

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CHAPTER 15: APPENDICES

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15.1: Appendix A- Foundational Theory Table

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Inclusive (eleven) foundational theories related to the study of families for the “Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens” textbook.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Conflict	Opposition, power, and conflict within the family and society are needed for society to develop and change.	Emphasizes the competing interests of familial roles including the male dominating the family and providing stability to society.		This theory was first perpetuated by Karl Marx and posits that social order is maintained through dominance and power.
Ecological Systems	Individuals are part of a group of concentric systems that impact their development and growth.	Children are influenced by the people and environments in which they spend the most time,, as well as the greater social events, trends and values.	Micro, Meso, Exo, Macro, and Chronosystems.	Urie Bronfenbrenner developed this theory in the second half of the 20th century; he influenced the creation of HeadStart in the United States.
Exchange (aka Social Exchange)	Individuals have differet strengths, resources and weaknesses and enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits and costs.	Emphasizes the motivation for familial relationships: that each person is giving and gaining within the family.	The “breadwinner-homemaker family” is the classic example.	
Feminism (aka Feminist)	Society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; the theory works to understand and to transform inequalities.	This theory emphasizes the way that gender roles are constructed within the family including the socialization of children.	Gender differences are mostly socially constructed. This theory draws on the Conflict, Exchange, and Symbolic Interaction perspectives.	Different from the Feminist Activist movement! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Functionalism	Social institutions function together in order to meet individual and group needs.	The family can be seen as an institution (e.g. breadwinner-homemaker family) that contributes to a harmonious society		Formulated originally in 19th century France, it was the dominant sociological theory in mid-20th century United States
Hierarchy of Needs	Individuals meet one set of needs first in order to be motivated and able to achieve other needs.	This theory influences family life in its arrangement of what needs are most important.		There is evidence that indigenous cultures in North America developed a hierarchy of needs earlier than the more well-known model created by Abraham Maslow.
Life Course	Pays attention to time including significant social and historical events and life transitions in their roles of shaping the trajectories of birth cohorts and the individuals in them.	Family life is impacted by large national and international events: wars, natural disasters, pandemics, economic depressions. In particular, children and adolescents in a given cohort will be impacted by these events over time.	Emerging Early Adulthood: the period of life when people shift into adulthood as they end their education, start a career and begin families. This period of life has become more varied and complex because of societal change.	Do not confuse this with the Lifespan theory which has a different emphasis! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.
Postmodernism (aka Modernity)	Choice and individuality are emphasized in the postmodern era. Humans are able to act in the way they choose with society and within institutions.	Individuals have a much greater choice than they did in the past about how they form their families, the roles they play and who is in their family. History, family, and tradition have decreasing roles in family life.	Reflexivity: the way in which people take in new information, reflect upon it, and adjust and act with new knowledge	This theory is a very broad one and applies to many aspects of work, societal, and family life. Social Theorist Anthony Giddens has written about this theory.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Psychosocial	Psychosocial theory explains changes in self-understanding, social relationships, and one's relationship to society from infancy through later life.	Interactions with family members are considered key to this theory, especially in infancy and early childhood.	Developmental crisis	
Structural Diversity	This approach examines the close connections between the inner workings of families and the social structures that shape all families, but in different ways.	Family diversity is constructed through interactions with social structures as well as the individual actions of family members	Social location: families are affected by the intersections of class, race, and gender which place them in differing social locations. Human Agency: the active shaping of family life by individual action.	This approach posited by Maxine Baca Zinn combines prior work in intersectionality with individual agency, family, and social structural factors.
Symbolic Interaction	This theory focuses on the changing nature of symbols and the ways we interact with one another based on those symbols. Humans see themselves through the eyes of others and this affects the roles they play.	Changing roles and symbols affect the ways family members interact with each other and with society. Societal expectations and social constructions of fathering and mothering roles have changed over time and this interacts with the way fathers and mothers actually behave.	Interpretation of shared understandings influences how humans respond and interact.	Has a basis in philosophy (George Herbert Mead) and in Sociology (Herbert Blumer.)

Core theories (seven) in Contemporary Families: An Equity Lens

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Ecological Systems	Individuals are part of a group of concentric systems that impact their development and growth.	Children are influenced by the people and environments in which they spend the most time,, as well as the greater social events, trends and values.	Micro, Meso, Exo, Macro, and Chronosystems.	Urie Bronfenbrenner developed this theory in the second half of the 20th century; he influenced the creation of HeadStart in the United States.
Exchange (aka Social Exchange)	Individuals have different strengths, resources and weaknesses and enter into relationships via the evaluation of benefits and costs.	Emphasizes the motivation for familial relationships: that each person is giving and gaining within the family.	The "breadwinner-homemaker family" is the classic example.	
Feminism (aka Feminist)	Society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; the theory works to understand and to transform inequalities.	This theory emphasizes the way that gender roles are constructed within the family including the socialization of children.	Gender differences are mostly socially constructed. This theory draws on the Conflict, Exchange, and Symbolic Interaction perspectives.	Different from the Feminist Activist movement! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.
Life Course	Pays attention to time including significant social and historical events and life transitions in their roles of shaping the trajectories of birth cohorts and the individuals in them.	Family life is impacted by large national and international events: wars, natural disasters, pandemics, economic depressions. In particular, children and adolescents in a given cohort will be impacted by these events over time.	Emerging Early Adulthood: the period of life when people shift into adulthood as they end their education, start a career and begin families. This period of life has become more varied and complex because of societal change.	Do not confuse this with the Lifespan theory which has a different emphasis! Read and listen carefully to avoid confusion.

Theory/ Perspective	Major Principles	Relation to Family Life	Key Vocabulary and Concepts	Important
Postmodernism (aka Modernity)	Choice and individuality are emphasized in the postmodern era. Humans are able to act in the way they choose with society and within institutions.	Individuals have a much greater choice than they did in the past about how they form their families, the roles they play and who is in their family. History, family, and tradition have decreasing roles in family life.	Reflexivity: the way in which people take in new information, reflect upon it, and adjust and act with new knowledge	This theory is a very broad one and applies to many aspects of work, societal, and family life. Social Theorist Anthony Giddens has written about this theory.
Structural Diversity	This approach examines the close connections between the inner workings of families and the social structures that shape all families, but in different ways.	Family diversity is constructed through interactions with social structures as well as the individual actions of family members	Social location: families are affected by the intersections of class, race, and gender which place them in differing social locations. Human Agency: the active shaping of family life by individual action.	This approach posited by Maxine Baca Zinn combines prior work in intersectionality with individual agency, family, and social structural factors.
Symbolic Interaction	This theory focuses on the changing nature of symbols and the ways we interact with one another based on those symbols. Humans see themselves through the eyes of others and this affects the roles they play.	Changing roles and symbols affect the ways family members interact with each other and with society. Societal expectations and social constructions of fathering and mothering roles have changed over time and this interacts with the way fathers and mothers actually behave.	Interpretation of shared understandings influences how humans respond and interact.	Has a basis in philosophy (George Herbert Mead) and in Sociology (Herbert Blumer.)

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15.2: Appendix B- Comparison of Family Rituals and Family Routines

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Meanings	Have special meaning and symbolic significance	Often have special meaning or symbolic significance
Associations	Closely tied to extraordinary events	Closely tied to ordinary family life
	Usually tied to culture, religion or faith, ethnicity, and social customs	Meaningful behaviors tied to family identity, member needs, and valued family events
Initiation	Often intergenerational; becomes more tightly enacted as the family is more committed over time and interests in retaining and transferring meaning to the future increase	Initiated when members identify themselves as family and desire a collective identity; tend to become more patterned and organized over time
Traits	Repetitive and highly structured actions related to celebrations, traditions, and cultural customs that include the entire family and have accompanying role expectations	Repetitive, with both highly and somewhat structured actions related to daily life and family function that may include the entire family, dyads, or triads and have accompanying role expectations
	Continue relatively unchanged across the life course	Changes based on members' and family household needs
	Systematically planned according to revered practices and customs	Response to valued behaviors, stress, change, transitions, development, and predictable life events
	Mostly based on esteemed family traditions	May be intentional, deliberate, and directed by shared values of multiple family members, but may also be unplanned

	Intergenerationally transmitted with few changes	Some may be transmitted across generations, but patterns may change

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15.3: Appendix C- Psychosocial Lifespan Development Theory

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A Brief Overview of Erik and Joan Erikson's Psychosocial Lifespan Theory

Name of Stage	Description of Stage
Trust vs. mistrust (0-1)	The infant must have basic needs met in a consistent way in order to feel that the world is a trustworthy place.
Autonomy vs. shame and doubt (1-2)	Mobile toddlers have newfound freedom they like to exercise and by being allowed to do so, they learn some basic independence.
Initiative vs. Guilt (3-5)	Preschoolers like to initiate activities and emphasize doing things "all by myself."
Industry vs. inferiority (6-11)	School aged children focus on accomplishments and begin making comparisons between themselves and their classmates
Identity vs. role confusion (adolescence)	Teenagers are trying to gain a sense of identity as they experiment with various roles, beliefs, and ideas.
Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adulthood)	In our 20s and 30s we are making some of our first long-term commitments in intimate relationships.
Generativity vs. stagnation (middle adulthood)	The 40s through the early 60s we focus on being productive at work and home and are motivated by wanting to feel that we've made a contribution to society.
Integrity vs. Despair (late adulthood)	We look back on our lives and hope to like what we see-that we have lived well and have a sense of integrity because we lived according to our beliefs.
Revistation of Stages (elderly adulthood)	In this stage elderly adults revisit the earlier stages and may resolve the stages differently, perhaps less positively, than before. Adults who can come to term with these changes are more likely to have an overall positive perspective on life.

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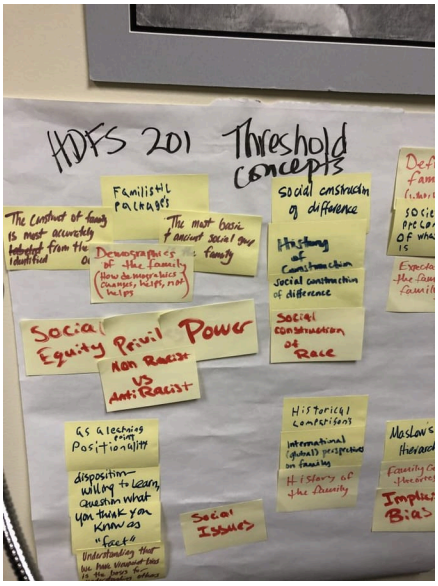
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15.4: Appendix E Origin Story from the 1st Edition of Contemporary Families- An Equity Lens

10

I've changed. Understanding how privilege, power, oppression, and discrimination overlap is life-altering. It humbles me to consider how much privilege I have and to wonder what families in the United States would look like if greater equity existed. Teaching a social justice class has been transformational.

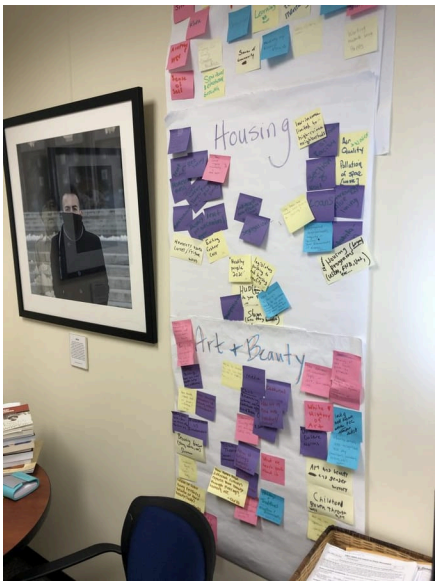
In 2007-2008 I took a sabbatical and was exposed to sociology, family, and social justice course work at Oregon State University. During that time I studied with Dr. Alexis J. Walker, Dr. Richard Settersten, and Dr. Becky Warner. I began to teach Contemporary Families in the United States (HDFS 201), at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC), which is a Difference, Power, and Discrimination course at both institutions.



My understanding continued to develop when I participated in the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Academy led by Dr. Nana Osei-Kofi at OSU. With the leadership of Dr. Katie Winder, DPD became institutionalized at LBCC. Colleague Matt Usner and I co-led the first DPD Faculty Learning Community in 2015. Continued learning is a core aspect of social justice learning. Just because I've taught about it for twelve years does not mean that I fully comprehend all of the complexities and depth of these concepts. I count myself among the learners among the community that I lead. Talking DPD teaching and learning alongside Isabelle Havet, Jane Sandberg, Lauren Visconti, Stephen Rust, Deron Carter, Christy Stevens, Verna Ourada, Matt Usner, Paul Hibbard, Joseph Jess, and Arfa Aflatooni is one of the privileges of teaching at LBCC.

Learning about privilege and oppression extends beyond the workplace. I am thankful to have family and friends who are willing to grapple with these concepts. Many dinner conversations with my daughters Rachel and Sarabeth and my partner Liz Baker have been devoted to dissecting the ways that we experience and observe institutionalized power and discrimination. So many hikes and walks have been absorbed by my own thinking or conversations about social justice with friends. Whatever I am reading, including my favorite thrillers, are seen through the lens of equity. Once you've seen it, it can't be unseen.

My greatest pleasures, challenges, and growth come from my work with LBCC students. I hear your questions; I read your articulation of concepts; I listen to your experiences being discriminated against; I support your work to comprehend your own privilege; I strive to understand the oppression you have experienced but perhaps did not have the language to describe. The greater my interactions with you, the better teacher I become.

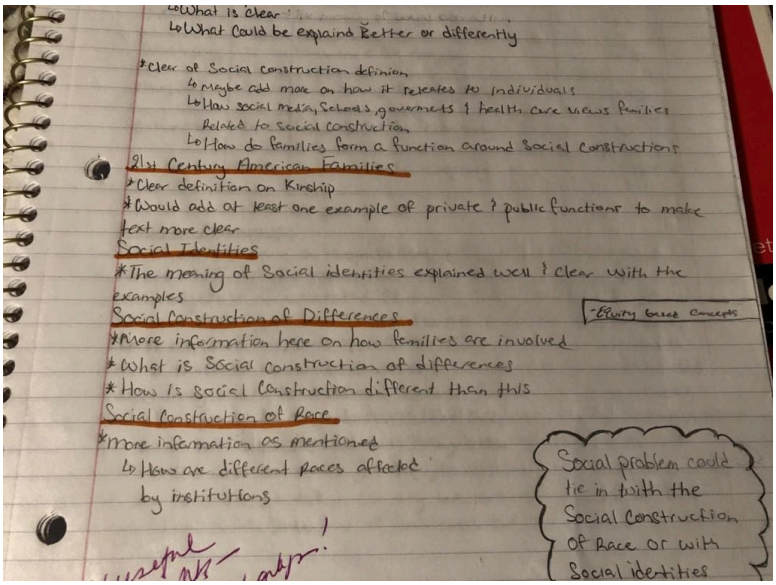


Through my interactions with students and colleagues, it became evident that the commercial text we were using did not fully support students in meeting the course outcomes. Searches over the past five years did not reveal an existing openly licensed (free to users to read, remix, or reuse) text. With funding and support from LBCC, I undertook to facilitate an open pedagogy project and write a new text. This new text takes an interdisciplinary approach that more fully supports understanding the interaction of society, institutions, privilege, and oppression.

There is strong instructional and budgetary support for creating open educational resources (OERs) that are free to students at LBCC. Certainly making knowledge more accessible makes college more equitable. Going beyond by involving student authors embeds equity within the actual text by facilitating the expression of diverse voices. Michaela Willi-Hooper, the OER Librarian, was instrumental in supporting this outcome. All three Deans who oversaw my work during this 18-month long project, Katie Winder, Oriana Mulatero Ferrando, and Meg Roland, provided additional support specifically so that students could be involved.

This openly licensed text approaches contemporary families from an equity lens and asks a question that more fully meets the Difference, Power, and Discrimination outcomes. “What do families need?” and “ How do society and institutions support or get in the way of families getting what they need?” In order to answer these questions, I included the voices of the consumers of this class. I asked, “What matters most to LBCC and OSU students when it comes to family needs?” This has shaped the content of the book; it is a far different book than I would have written alone. I wanted to emphasize diversity of viewpoint, experience, social identity, and voice. It was the best way I could think of to live the concepts of Difference, Power, and Discrimination.

It takes a lot of guts to help write a textbook when you are an undergraduate, even more if you are the first person in your family to attend college. The thirteen students who participated in this project have my utmost regard for their courage and their scholarship. Deep examination of institutionalized privilege, oppression and justice is challenging and painful. They brainstormed, questioned, researched, debated, outlined, drew, and wrote. Each one has their own personal connection to the needs of families and the inequities that families experience. They introduced and advocated for the inclusion of topics that have an immediate relevance to current students’ lives.



The book content was created from brainstorming and discussion sessions with the students, followed by research conducted by the student authors, librarian and contributor, Michaela Willi-Hooper, and myself. The brainstorming sessions conducted in person during the winter and via ZOOM in spring term were integral to expressing a diversity of voice. Without those sessions, my own perspective, that comes from experiencing more privilege than most students, would override topics and viewpoints that student families experience and care about. The three images here in the preface come from student brainstorming and journaling sessions. Much of the book is written either by me or via collaborative efforts with students; you will see groups of names listed on those chapters where we collaborated. In the Justice chapter, I wanted you to read the students' words unfiltered; you will see the individual authors credited. I hope that future students will add to this chapter.

One of the best parts of an openly licensed digital text is that it is a living document. While this has been one of the most invigorating experiences of my life, it is not over. I invite you to be a part of the future of this text. When the time comes to revise this text, I will be incorporating the suggestions of colleagues, students, and friends. When there is more funding available, additional chapters with topics like education and employment will be added. I look forward to the future of this book, to its contribution to understanding inequities that families face, and the knowledge that it inspires us to advocate for and improve structures and society.

–Elizabeth B. Pearce, September 2020

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GLOSSARY

A

Acculturation | the process of adapting to a new culture.

Achievement gap | significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) | traumas that occur in an individual's life before they turn 18, which include neglect, abuse, and household difficulties.

Affordable housing | housing that can be accessed and maintained while paying for and meeting other basic needs such as food, transportation, access to work and school, clothing, and health care.

Age | the developmental changes and transitions that come with being a child, adolescent, or adult.

Allies | a person who forms relationships with and advocates with or for others who are marginalized but do not have that marginalized identity themselves.

American Community Survey (ACS) | a program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that gathers demographic information annually in the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Anchoring practices | the behaviors, efforts, and actions people carry out to seek, create, and maintain a sense of community and rootedness.

Artistic representation | the use of a medium, such as clay or paint, to construct a representation of the real thing. Artistic representations are constructions of reality.

Assimilation strategy | an acculturation strategy consisting of pursuing and adopting the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the new society or dominant culture.

Assortative mating | the tendency to choose intimate mates who are more like oneself.

Attachment theory | the theory that the capacity to form emotional attachments to others is primarily developed during infancy and early childhood.

B

Beauty ideals | a specific set of beauty standards regarding traits that are ingrained in women throughout their lives.

Biculturalism | when a person has been exposed to and has internalized elements from two or more cultures.

Binary | a social construct composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites.

Birth rate | the number of live births per 1,000 women in the total population.

Black feminist critiques | a body of critical and creative work written by Black women in the United States regarding feminism and how it often ignores racism and class oppression.

Bluelining | real estate that is considered high risk due to low elevation and flooding due to climate change may not qualify for loans.

Bracero program | a series of laws and diplomatic agreements initiated in 1942, when the United States signed an agreement with Mexico.

C

Care work | the daily work that keeps a household running and the adults and children within it well cared for.

Caregiving | the act of providing support or watching over a person.

Child abuse | the intentional emotional, negligent, physical, or sexual mistreatment of a child by an adult.

Childcare | usually used to refer to non-parental care of a young child, often in a paid provider's home or in a childcare center.

Childcare trilemma | the acknowledgement that it is difficult to provide affordable, accessible, and high-quality care without some kind of subsidy or support.

Chosen families | nonbiological kinship bonds, whether legally recognized or not, deliberately chosen for the purpose of mutual support and love.

Cisgender | a person who identifies in accordance with their gender assignment.

Collectivist society | a societal viewpoint that focuses on meeting the needs and goals of all members of a community, rather than focusing on individual successes.

Colorism | prejudice or discrimination that favors people with lighter skin over those with darker skin, especially within a racial or ethnic group.

Companionate marriage | in addition to economic stability, these marriages also have an expectation of love, affection, friendship, and sexual fidelity and satisfaction.

Comparative approach | within the fields of anthropology and sociology, the act of examining and contrasting social processes and institutions with a view to draw inferences and understand patterns.

Concerted cultivation | a parenting style that emphasizes adult-led enrichment programs for children.

Cost-burdened households | households that pay 30% or more of monthly income toward housing.

Criminalization | the act of making an activity or person illegal by making their activity a criminal offense.

Cultural erasure | the practice of a dominant or hegemonic culture actively or passively contributing to the erasure, or disappearing, of a non-dominant or minoritized culture.

Cultural humility | the focus on staying other-centered in order to learn about and understand the experiences and viewpoints of people with social identities different from your own.

Culture | the shared meanings and shared experiences passed down over time by individuals in a group, such as beliefs, values, symbols, means of communication, religion, logics, rituals, fashions, etiquette, foods, and art that unite a particular society.

D

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) | a U.S. immigration policy that allows individuals who arrived in the United States as children to remain and work in the country for a renewable period of two years. This policy has been legalized and implemented inconsistently in the 2000s.

Demographics | statistical data about particular groups and changes in trends within the overall population.

Disabilities | the visible or hidden and temporary or permanent conditions that create barriers or challenges in one's life.

Discrimination | the unequal treatment of an individual or group on the basis of their statuses (e.g., age, beliefs, ethnicity, sex).

Disenfranchisement | the state of being rejected or being deprived of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote.

Dysfunction | behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or society.

E

Ecological systems theory | a framework that looks at individuals within their environments.

Educational debt | the cumulative impact of fewer resources and other harm directed at students of color.

Elder abuse | when older people are deprived of care or intentionally harmed by their caretakers.

Emotional abuse | nonphysical maltreatment through verbal language.

Emotional labor | the regulation or hiding of emotions as a part of a work role.

Emphasized femininity | a concept rooted in the patriarchy that women must conform to the needs and desires of men by compliance with the normative ideas of femininity.

Environmental justice | an intersectional social movement pioneered by African American, Indigenous, Latinx, female, lower-income, and other people from historically oppressed populations fighting against environmental discrimination within their communities and across the world.

Epigenetics | the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work.

Equity | ensuring that people have what they need in order to have a healthy, successful life that is equal to others. Different from equality in that some may receive more help than others in order to be at the same level of success.

Ethnic group | a subgroup of a population with a set of shared social, cultural, and historical experiences; relatively distinctive beliefs, values, and behaviors; and some sense of identity of belonging to the subgroup.

Ethnic identity | a sense of self that is derived from a sense of belonging to a group, a culture, and a particular setting.

Ethnicity | the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national, ancestral, or regional backgrounds, that make subgroups of a population different from one another.

Existential psychology | an approach that focuses on the "whole" person and the major concerns of death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness.

Experiments | a primary form of research in natural and physical sciences that involves comparing and contrasting at least two different interventions.

F

Fair Housing Act | an act that protects people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing

assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities.

Family form | the structure of a family, including the members and their relationships to one another.

Family function | the way a family's members behave toward each other and within society.

Family ritual | behaviors with symbolic meanings that can be clearly described and serve to organize and affirm central family ideas.

Family routine | the predictable, repeated, consistent patterns that characterize everyday home life.

Fecundity rate | the reproductive rate for people who want to have biological children who are able to get pregnant and give birth.

Feminist movement | a series of social movements and political campaigns for radical and liberal reforms regarding sex and gender equity, women's issues, and sexism.

Fertility rate | the number of people in a specific age range who are able to give birth.

First language | the language learned in early childhood.

Food desert | geographic locations where there is very limited or no access to affordable and nutritious foods.

Food insecurity | low or very low access to food of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet (may or may not show patterns of disrupted eating).

Food security | no or little reported indications of food access problems or limitations.

Food stamps | the previous name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people.

Food system | The interconnected systems and processes that influence nutrition, food, health, community development, and agriculture.

Forced assimilation | the process by which a religious or ethnic minority group is forced to give up their own identity by taking on the cultural characteristics of an established and generally larger community.

G

Gender | a socially constructed expression of a person's sexual identity which influences the status, roles, and norms for their behavior.

Generational trauma | trauma that moves from one generation to the next, as experiences of parents affect the biological, social, mental, or emotional development of their children and sometimes also their grandchildren (also "intergenerational trauma" or "multigenerational trauma").

Generativity | the concern for the future and one's own contribution to the next generation.

Genocide | the deliberate destruction, in whole or in part, by a government or its agents of a racial, sexual, religious, tribal, or political minority. It can involve not only mass murder but also starvation; forced deportation; and political, economic, and biological subjugation.

Glass ceiling | an artificial, unseen, and often unacknowledged discriminatory barrier that prevents otherwise qualified people such as women and minorities from rising to positions of leadership and power, particularly within a corporation.

Glass cliff | purposeful promotion of women into positions with high risk for failure.

Glass escalator | quick movement from entry-level to power-holding, higher-paying leadership jobs.

Grandfamily | a family in which grandparents are the primary caregivers to their grandchildren; usually the parents are not present.

H

Health | the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Health disparities | preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations.

Health equity | equal access to health benefits for all people, regardless of identity.

Health insurance | a type of insurance, paid for by the consumer or another entity, that covers the whole or a part of the risk of a person incurring medical expenses.

Hegemonic masculinity | a specific type of culturally valued masculinity tied to marriage, heterosexuality, and patriarchal authority that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women, nonbinary people, gay men, and other marginalized groups of men.

Heritage cultural orientation | the extent to which individuals are involved with their heritage, ethnic, or nondominant culture.

Hierarchy of needs theories | a framework articulated by multiple Indigenous groups that emphasizes self-actualization not just of the individual but of the community as the most primary of needs.

Historical trauma | cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma.

Homophobia | fear, hatred, or prejudice toward gay people.

Household size | all the people occupying a housing unit.

Houseless/houselessness | lacking a permanent place to live.

Housing First | an approach with the belief that people need basic necessities like food and shelter before focusing on other needs such as substance use, employment, or budget.

Housing insecurity | having a place to live but having uncertainty about meeting basic needs or needing to move frequently.

I

Implicit bias | an unconscious tendency to favor one person, group, or point of view over another usually based on social characteristics such as gender, sexuality, race or socioeconomic status.

Incarceration | being confined within a prison or jail.

Individualistic society | emphasizes the needs and success of the individual over the needs of a community.

Individualized marriage | responsibilities and roles are more fluid and the enhancement of individual well-being and psychological growth is added to expectations.

Institutionalized marriage | a relationship in which roles are clearly defined between the man and the woman in the pursuit of economic and familial stability.

Integration strategy | an acculturation strategy utilized by those who wish to maintain one's original culture as a member of an ethnocultural group while also participating as an integral member of the larger social network.

Intergenerational trauma | a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are similar to those of the person who experienced the event.

Intersectionality | an approach originally advanced by women of color that finds it critical to look at how identities and characteristics (such as ethnicity, race, and gender) overlap and influence each other to create complex hierarchies of power and oppression.

Intersex | a variation in sex characteristics, such as chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) | any incident or pattern of behaviors (physical, psychological, sexual, or verbal) used by one partner to maintain power and control over the relationship.

Intimate relationships | characterized by mutual trust, caring, and acceptance and often imply a romantic or sexual relationship.

J

Justice | concerned with equity, equality, fairness and sometimes punishment.

K

Kin-keeping | effort to build and maintain relationships between family members.

Kinship | the social structure that ties people together (whether by blood, marriage, legal processes, or other agreements) and includes family relationships.

L

Life chances | a social science theory created by German sociologist Max Weber in 1920. The theory of life chances postulates that an individual's opportunity to lead a successful and fulfilling life are correlated to a variety of factors, including social stratification, social class, social mobility, and social equality, all of which can give a person low or high life chances.

M

Male gaze | the idealized notion of a heterosexual man as the intended audience in a way that facilitates men objectifying or sexualizing women and women seeing themselves as objects of men's desire.

Marginalization strategy | an acculturation strategy where a person neither seeks relationships with aspects of the host culture nor maintains their heritage, culture, and identity.

Meaning | can include the emotional significance of an action or way of being; the intention or reason for doing something; something that we create and feel; closely linked to motivation.

Mental health | a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life.

Mental illness | a wide range of mental health disorders that affect your mood, thinking, and behavior.

Militarization | the process of preparing for war or another conflict; can refer to the transformation of a civilian agency becoming more like a

military operation.

Mortality rate | the rate of death for a particular group or in a particular area.

Multigenerational families | more than two generations of a family living together.

N

Natural growth | a parenting style that emphasizes child-led games and activities, often in multi-age groups from the same family or neighborhood.

Nature and nurture | a discussion about the relationship between biological and environmental factors in a child's development.

Neglect | failure to meet a child's basic needs.

Nuclear family | a family group that consists of two parents and their children living together in one household.

O

Objectification | a social meaning imposed on one's being that defines them as an object or thing, typically within a sexual context.

Objectivity | the act of staying free from the influence of personal experiences and opinions.

Observational studies | a type of field research that includes both participant observation and nonparticipant observation.

Opioid | substances that affect the neurons in our brain by blocking pain and providing a feeling of calm and euphoria.

Origin | the geographical location where a person was born and spent (at least) their early years in.

P

Pan-ethnicity | the grouping together of multiple ethnicities and nationalities under a single label.

Parenting styles | usually refers to Baumrind's four styles of parenting, which include authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved.

Physical abuse | any act, completed or attempted, that physically hurts or injures someone.

Polyamory | having intimate relationships with more than one person at a time.

Poverty line | the estimated minimum level of income needed to secure the necessities of life, adjusted annually for inflation.

Private function of families | focuses on the intimate relationships of family members. Being a part of a loving relationship that will last forever, or an indefinite amount of time, is seen as a core part of being a family member

Protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs) | experiences that help children develop and promote resilience, even if they also have some adverse or traumatic childhood experiences.

Protest art | a way of using creative work to communicate used by activists and social movements.

Psychosocial model | a framework that emphasizes our relationships and that society's expectations motivate much of our behavior and the importance of conscious thought.

Public art | art in any medium whose form, function, and meaning are created for the general public, often through a public process.

Public function of families | focuses on contributions to society such as the production of children or caring for others.

Public school | maintained through public funds to educate children living in that community or district without cost to families.

Purpose | can include the aim, goal, or intention of an action; a long-term guiding principle; the impact our life has on the world.

Q

Qualitative research | the descriptive, in-depth study of a topic.

Quantitative research | the numbers-based, measurable study of a topic.

R

Race | the categorization of humans using observable physical or biological criteria, such as skin color, hair color or texture, facial features, etc.

Rape culture | a society or environment where there is a culture of disbelief and lack of support for sexual violence survivors through normalizing and trivializing sexual violence despite its prevalent occurrence.

Redlining | the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable or racially occupied.

Renters | a person who does not own their place of living but pays another party to live in their place of living.

Representation | the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way.

Research | a systematic investigation into a particular topic, examining materials, sources, and/or behaviors.

Residential segregation | the physical separation of two or more groups into different neighborhoods.

Restorative justice | an intentional way of handling an offense involving three stakeholders within an organization or community

Restorative practices | a social science that studies how to build, strengthen, and repair relationships among individuals, as well as connections within communities.

Rite of passage | a ritual or celebration that marks the passage when a person leaves one status, role, set of conditions, or group to enter another.

S

Sanitation | conditions relating to public health, especially the provision of clean drinking water and adequate sewage disposal.

Scientific process | the process of formulating hypotheses, making observations, gathering and testing data, drawing conclusions, and modifying hypotheses.

Secondary data analysis | the study of existing research.

Section 8 housing | a program that authorizes the payment of rental housing assistance to private landlords on behalf of low-income households.

Separate spheres | a binary, gender-based ideology that emerged during the industrial period that stated women were best suited for home and domestic work while men were best suited for public work.

Separation strategy | an acculturation strategy where a person places a high value on maintaining the integrity of their original cultural identity and avoids interaction with those of the new society.

Sex | a biological descriptor involving chromosomes and internal/external reproductive organs.

Sexual abuse | maltreatment, violation, and exploitation where a perpetrator forces, coerces, or threatens someone into sexual contact for sexual gratification and/or financial benefit.

Sexual orientation | a person's emotional, romantic, erotic, and spiritual attractions toward another in relation to their own sex or gender.

Sexual violence | making degrading comments, touching in unpleasant means of harm, or addressing a partner in a degrading way during sexual intercourse, which includes marital rape.

Sexuality | the pattern of romantic and/or sexual attraction to others in relation to one's own gender identity.

Sharecropper | a type of farming in which families rent small plots of land from a landowner in return for a portion of their crop, to be given to the landowner at the end of each year.

Shelters | places and organizations that provide temporary living space for houseless families and individuals.

Social characteristic | describes traits that may be biologically determined and/or socially constructed. Examples include sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, first language, and religion.

Social class | similar to socioeconomic status with a closer focus on income and wealth.

Social construction | meaning assigned to an object or event by mutual agreement (explicit or implicit) of the members of a society; can change over time and/or location.

Social construction of difference | hierarchical value assigned to perceived differences between one socially constructed idea and another. Class, race, and other hierarchies based on social identity are social constructions of difference.

Social identity | a person's sense of self as defined by and in relation to the combination of social characteristics, roles, and groups to which they belong.

Social justice | focuses on equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal treatment as well as meaningful actions to correct past discrimination.

Social mobility | an individual's or family's movement through the class hierarchy due to changes in income, occupation, or wealth.

Social model of ability | a view of diagnoses from a social and environmental perspective that considers multiple ecological levels.

Social movement | a loosely organized effort by a large group of people to achieve a social goal, such as carrying out change or resisting or undoing the status quo.

Social problem | a large issue that affects many people, can threaten the health and well-being of society, is recognized as a problem by many, includes multiple causes and effects, and needs a systemic solution.

Social stratification | society's layers, made of people, represent the uneven distribution of society's resources.

Social structure | the organization of institutions within society; this affects the ways individuals and families interact together.

Socioeconomic class | a person's income or material wealth, educational status, and/or occupational status.

Sociological perspective | viewpoints that emphasize causes, effects, and actions of groups of individuals,including patterns of behaviors.

Standard North American Family (SNAF) | a family group that consists of two parents and their children living together in one household.

Stigma | a negative or discriminatory attitude toward others related to a specific characteristic or difference, often of a marginalized identity.

Structural mobility | societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the social class ladder.

Student debt | a loan taken to attend college that has not yet been repaid.

Subjective | influenced by personal experiences and opinions.

Substance use disorder (SUD) | a disease that affects the brain and includes the uncontrolled use of something despite harmful consequences (sometimes called substance abuse).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) | a federal program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people.

Survey | a method by which sociologists gather their data by asking questions.

Symbolic annihilation | a concept that refers to how marginalized groups of people are left absent, condemned, or trivialized through mass media representations, instead portraying oppressive ideologies created and enforced by dominant groups.

T

Theory | a structural framework, explanation, or tool that has been tested and evaluated over time.

Transgender people | individuals who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Typecasting | the act of casting a person in a media role often based on physical appearance or stereotypes.

U

U.S. census | a population census that takes place every 10 years and is legally mandated by the U.S. Constitution.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) | the government department responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food in the United States.

Union formation | an intimate relationship, in which two or more people commit to some kind of union, including marriage.

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights | an international document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that enshrines the rights and freedoms of all human beings.

V

Visual culture | combinations of visual events in which information, meaning, or pleasure are expressed tangibly or visibly.

Voter registration | the process whereby citizens register with election officials in order to become eligible to vote.

Voucher | supplied by the government or other public entity for families to use to offset the cost of a private school.

W

Wastewater | water that has been used for a domestic or industrial purpose that must be cleaned before it is used again.

Whiteness | the quality of being light or White skinned in color and the normalization of White racial identity throughout history in the United States.

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Epigraph

"Until the lion tells the story, the hunter will always be the hero."
–African Proverb

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Self-Check Questions

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Questions

Chapter 1: Social Constructions

1. Which demographic trends have been observed in American families over recent decades?
    1. An increase in the nuclear family living arrangement
    2. A decrease in single-parent households
    3. An increase in the divorce rate relative to marriage rates
    4. An increase in the average age of first marriages
2. Which statement best summarizes the impact of industrialization on family structures?
    1. Industrialization led to the universal adoption of the nuclear family model.
    2. Industrialization had no significant impact on family structures or gender roles.
    3. Industrial capitalism created separate spheres for women and men to labor.
    4. Families became less important as economic units during industrialization.
3. When we talk about social constructions, we mean that:
    1. People create meaning through social interactions.
    2. Social problems do not have real consequences.
    3. Each individual has their version of the truth.
    4. People have good and bad habits.
4. Which U.S. Supreme Court ruling(s) illustrates the government's influence on family formation and challenges the notion of universally applicable rights within marriage and family law? Select all that apply.
    1. The unanimous 1967 Loving v. Virginia ruling which declared state laws banning interracial marriage unconstitutional.
    2. The Child and Dependent Care Credit legislation defines a family based on economic dependency rather than biological or marital connections.
    3. The decision to enforce the Page Act of 1875, which restricted Chinese women from entering the U.S.
    4. The 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision legalized same-sex marriage across all states.

Chapter 2: Studying Families

1. Which of the following are considered to be critical dispositions for learning about families and equity? Select all that apply.
    1. Willingness to question ingrained beliefs
    2. Openness to new ideas and ways of thinking
    3. Preference to work alone rather than in diverse groups
    4. Willingness to be uncomfortable during the learning process
2. You receive a questionnaire from your school's health center asking for information about your health and mental health using an online form. This is an example of which type of research design?
    1. Survey
    2. Experiments
    3. Observation
    4. Existing data
3. Which of the following statements best reflects the concept of diversity in families presented in the chapter?
    1. Diversity is limited to observable characteristics such as race and ethnicity of family members.
    2. Diversity is based solely on the family's socioeconomic status.
    3. Diversity encompasses a broad range of dimensions that emphasize the complexity and intersectionality of individual and collective identities within families.
    4. The primary focus of diversity within families is on gender and sexual orientation, with other dimensions playing secondary roles in shaping family dynamics and individual experiences.
4. Which statement best describes the relationship between socioeconomic status and an individual's or family's life experiences in the United States?
    1. Socioeconomic status does not significantly impact life experiences or opportunities.

2. Social mobility is easily achieved through hard work.
3. Socioeconomic status is critical in determining opportunities, life experiences, and position.
4. Socioeconomic status is determined only by an individual's income.

5. Which of the following statements best matches the structural diversity perspective?
    1. Families' needs are best met through the structure of the traditional nuclear family.
    2. Families are shaped by social structures in differing ways.
    3. Families are the same, regardless of race, gender, class, and social structures.
    4. Families from oppressed groups have no power to make choices and meet their needs.
6. Which of the following statements is a part of the definition of a social problem? Select all that apply.
    1. It has negative consequences for large numbers of people.
    2. It relates to people's communication and social life.
    3. It is a social construction.
    4. It must be solved through collective action, not individual behavior change.

Chapter 3: Connection, Community, Love, and Partnering

1. According to family theories, why are close social relationships important? Select all that apply.
    1. They act as social support networks during times of stress.
    2. Popular people tend to live longer.
    3. Connection is a human need.
    4. Chosen families support the healthy development of people who are LGBTQ+.
2. Which statement(s) describes binary systems and their impact on society? Select all that apply.
    1. Binary systems accurately categorize human experiences and identities without exceptions.
    2. Binary systems simplify complex human experiences into two opposing categories.
    3. Binary systems can lead to stereotypes and erase the existence of those who do not fit neatly into these categories.
    4. Binary systems easily accommodate a wide range of human identities and experiences.
3. According to assortative mating, people choose partners based on what primary focus?Select all that apply.
    1. Choosing partners based on their financial assets and material possessions.
    2. Choosing mates who are significantly different from themselves.
    3. Choosing partners who are more like themselves than if mates were assigned randomly.
    4. Selecting mates purely based on physical attractiveness and sexual attraction.
4. Which of the following best describes the evolution of marriage in the United States? Select all that apply.
    1. The concept of marriage has remained fairly static over time.
    2. Marriage historically focused on economic and familial stability.
    3. Today, people seek flexibility and self-actualization in marriage.
    4. Marriage has always been centered around the idea of self-actualization and personal happiness.
5. The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Obergefell v. Hodges established that the right to marry is fundamental and must be extended equally to all couples, thereby eliminating all legal inequities and societal stigma associated with same-sex marriage.
    1. True
    2. False
6. What has research indicated about the psychological consequences of divorce? Select all that apply.
    1. The effects of poverty, which many women and children face after divorce, affects them negatively.
    2. Divorced spouses experience improved psychological well-being right after divorce.
    3. The mental health of divorced spouses often declines immediately after divorce but may improve over time.
    4. Divorce has no significant psychological effects on spouses.

Chapter 4: Nurturance, Parenting, and Caregiving

1. Which of the following is true about caregiving in kinship and family life? Select all that apply.
    1. Only biological parents are recognized as caregivers in families.
    2. People receive care only when they are young.
    3. Children may take on caregiving roles throughout their lives.
    4. Caregiving may come from grandparents, adoptive, foster, and other non-biological relationships.
2. According to ecological systems theory, which is the most comprehensive system that classifies COVID-19's impact on family and child development? Select all that apply.
    1. The microsystem

2. The mesosystem
3. The macrosystem
4. The chronosystem

3. What one factor is believed to contribute to the declining birth, fertility, and fecundity rates in the United States? Select all that apply.
    1. Longer life expectancy
    2. Economic challenges
    3. Higher rates of divorce
    4. There is no one deciding factor
4. How does public policy affect parent-child attachment? Select all that apply.
    1. Policies have no direct impact on family dynamics or attachment.
    2. Policies supporting traditional family structures enhance attachment in those families.
    3. Policies can unintentionally damage family attachments and security.
    4. Family separation policies are designed to damage family attachment directly.
5. How are adults without children perceived in society? Select all that apply.
    1. Reasonable, rational people
    2. Selfish
    3. Less masculine or feminine
    4. Living the American Dream

Chapter 5: Routines, Traditions, and Culture

1. Which of the following are true about the benefits of routines? Select all that apply.
    1. Family routines can reduce anxiety by giving children a sense of stability and security.
    2. Adolescents are less susceptible to experiencing depression and have fewer mental health problems when engaged in family routines.
    3. Children are more likely to develop extroverted personalities if they have routines in their lives.
    4. Children can develop a sense of predictability from routines and this contributes to self-regulation.
2. Which of the following can be characterized as a routine rather than a ritual? Select all that apply.
    1. Praying for the safety of family members before you go to sleep each night.
    2. The daily practice of a family eating dinner together.
    3. A quinceañera to celebrate a young girl's coming of age.
    4. A celebration of life event to acknowledge the passing of a loved one.
3. Which of the following are true of having a sense of belonging? Select all that apply.
    1. Feeling like an important part of a family, workplace, or other social system leads to positive psychosocial aspects.
    2. Aligning with a cultural identity or subculture fosters a feeling of belonging.
    3. Belonging comes from a set of competencies people use to love others.
    4. Feelings of belonging are limited to nuclear families.
4. According to theorist John Berry, there are four acculturation strategies. Which of the following describes people who use assimilation? Select all that apply.
    1. They do not seek to maintain their cultural identity and instead pursue close interaction with other cultures.
    2. They wish to maintain their original culture as members of an ethnocultural group.
    3. They take on the norms, values, and traditions of the new society.
    4. They take on elements of both their original culture and their new social context.

Chapter 6: Representation and Belonging in Social Systems

1. Which of the following reasons describe why the U.S. Census is important to families? Select all that apply.
    1. It is the only data available on large groups of families.
    2. It is intended to collect data from U.S. citizens, only.
    3. It launched the American Community Survey, which provides detailed information on family dynamics.
    4. It is used to determine how federal funding for families is distributed.
2. My _____ describes my relationship to power and privilege in society. Select all that apply.
    1. Social location
    2. Social identity
    3. Social structure
    4. Microaggression

3. What is the proper role of an ally in social justice movements like Black Lives Matter? Select all that apply.
    1. Remaining neutral and unbiased.
    2. Using one's privilege to speak for people who are voiceless.
    3. Listening to the perspectives of people with lived experience and the least power.
    4. Asking questions to oppressed people to understand their oppression better.

Chapter 7: Health and Health Care

1. Which of the following is true concerning social perception and the stigmatization of disease? Select all that apply.
    1. Societal perception does not significantly influence the stigmatization of disease.
    2. Diseases with a high level of awareness face no stigma.
    3. The stigma around certain diseases, like lung cancer, can lead to discrimination in care.
    4. Stigma is more common in diseases that are well-researched.
2. Which of the following contributes to worse health for some groups in society? Select all that apply.
    1. Poverty
    2. Inadequate access to healthcare
    3. Individual and behavioral factors
    4. High education levels
3. The Affordable Care Act led to an increase in the number of people with health insurance. Gaps in coverage remain for which groups of people? Select all that apply.
    1. People over the age of 65.
    2. People living in states that did not expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.
    3. People who are pregnant.
    4. People who need insurance to cover dental and vision problems.

Chapter 8: Housing

1. After trending downward since 1780, the average number of people per household in the U.S. is beginning to trend upward.
    1. True
    2. False
2. Which of the following describes how the Bracero and H-2 visa programs function? Select all that apply.
    1. The programs offer paths to establishing residency or citizenship in the United States.
    2. The programs offered comfortable housing in good neighborhoods.
    3. The programs employ people throughout the year.
    4. In many cases, guest workers were isolated and were prevented from having visitors.
3. Lending institutions and the federal government created maps that designated the places where people of color and foreign-born individuals lived as too "dangerous" or "risky" to receive housing loans. Which terms best describe this practice?
    1. The Fair Housing Act
    2. Redlining
    3. Residential segregation
    4. Bluelining
4. Which of the following are principles of the Housing First approach to ending houselessness? Select all that apply.
    1. Housing is a human right.
    2. All people are "ready for housing."
    3. People must be sober and employed before they can be housed.
    4. Group homes are just as good as independent housing.

Chapter 9: Safety and Stability

1. Which of the following are listed as one of the ten Protective and Compensatory Experiences (PACEs) that help children develop resilience? Select all that apply.
    1. An adult mentor outside of the family unit who provides guidance and support.
    2. Regular opportunities to help others, through volunteering or participation in other community projects.
    3. Access to the Internet for educational purposes.
    4. Engagement in hobbies, such as playing a musical instrument.
2. Which of the following are benefits of paid parental leave for families? Select all that apply.
    1. Healthy attachment and bonding with a newborn.

2. Physical recovery from expecting, birthing, or caring for a new child.
3. Feeling safe that one's income will not change while caring for a new child.
4. Increased support from external family members such as grandparents.

3. Research suggests that the trauma experienced by Holocaust survivors can be passed down to their descendants through biological means, specifically through epigenetics.
    1. True
    2. False
4. Which of the following statements describes a benefit of educating people about abuse and neglect? Select all that apply.
    1. Education prevents people from becoming abusers
    2. Education helps people identify early warning signs of abuse.
    3. Education helps people create healthy relationships.
    4. Education provides an effective deterrent to abuse and neglect.

Chapter 10: Food and Water

1. Which of the following statements describes a food desert?
    1. A rural area that has a grocery store within 5 miles of where most people live.
    2. An urban area that has less than one grocery store per mile.
    3. An urban area with mostly fast food and convenience stores.
    4. A rural area with fewer than 5 grocery stores.
2. What was the poverty line calculation based on initially (1963)?
    1. Total monthly expenses on housing and utilities.
    2. Three times the cost of the lowest-cost food plan that provides the required nutrients.
    3. The average income of a lower-middle-class family.
    4. Total monthly expenses, including housing, food, and utilities.
3. Which of the following statements concerning early food experiences is correct? Select all that apply.
    1. People who were not exposed to various foods as children may become picky eaters.
    2. Children who do not practice socializing during meals may struggle with social norms at the dining table.
    3. Children may eat more processed foods if they see their friends do so.
    4. Children are not influenced by commercials promoting certain snack foods.
4. What was the primary reason Flint city officials changed the water source from the Detroit Water and Sewage Department to the Flint River in 2014?
    1. The water from the Detroit River was contaminated.
    2. The city was looking for a higher-quality water source.
    3. To save money due to the city's financial crisis.
    4. The Detroit Water and Sewage Department ceased operations.
5. The formation of the United States led to the restriction of Native Americans to reservations, the enslavement of African immigrants, and discriminatory laws against immigrants, all of which continue to affect families today.
    1. True
    2. False

Chapter 11: Justice

1. Which of the following statistics is true about families impacted by incarceration?
    1. Half of all adults in the United States have had an immediate family member incarcerated.
    2. Black adults are less likely than White adults to have a family member incarcerated.
    3. Middle and upper-income families are more likely to have a family member incarcerated.
    4. Latinx adults are twice as likely as White adults to have a family member incarcerated.
2. Which of the following statistics is accurate about sexual violence by police officers? Select all that apply.
    1. Sexual assault is the least commonly reported form of police misconduct.
    2. 32% of African-American transgender women in police custody report being sexually assaulted by police.
    3. Less than 1,000 police officers have lost their jobs due to sexual misconduct since 2010.
    4. Black men are 10% less likely to be victims of police sexual violence than White men.
3. Which of the following statements is accurate about substance use and mental health disorders? Select all that apply.
    1. People of color and White people use drugs at about the same rate.
    2. Substance use disorders are always caused by trauma.
    3. Continuing to use drugs despite negative consequences is a sign of a substance use disorder.

4. Mental health diagnoses and substance use disorders are unrelated to each other.

4. Which of the following statements about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program is correct?
    1. DACA provides a permanent pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
    2. DACA provides a green card for students seeking to attend a university in the United States.
    3. DACA is available to immigrants who entered the United States after 2013.
    4. DACA serves 25% fewer people in 2024 than it did in 2012.

Chapter 12: Visual Culture

1. Which of the following statements is correct about artistic representations of families? Select all that apply.
    1. Art education influences students' ability to tell fact from fiction.
    2. Art history is often told by Indigenous people and those with the least power.
    3. Art that is displayed publicly (museums, history books, media, etc.) most often represents the dominant culture.
    4. Art invites critical discussion and other viewpoints.
2. Which of the following is correct about public art? Select all that apply.
    1. Public art is always controlled by the government.
    2. Public art is intended to represent universal concepts.
    3. Public art is often determined by power in the dominant culture.
    4. Public art must be accessible to the public.
3. "Green Book"is a 2018 film that was criticized for telling a story about anti-Black discrimination of a famous musician through the experiences of a White driver who defends him against oppression. What "White-centered" issues did critics note with the film? Select all that apply.
    1. It was primarily told from a White person's point of view.
    2. The lead actor was White.
    3. A White Savior character helps fix racist experiences.
    4. It used outdated racial stereotypes.
4. In the classic Disney movie "Sleeping Beauty" (1959), the princess is revived from an evil spell by her true love's kiss. Which of the following describes how gender is represented in this film? Select all that apply.
    1. Emphasized femininity
    2. Beauty ideals
    3. Objectification
    4. Implicit bias
5. How does the halo effect indicate attractiveness is associated with positive traits? Select all that apply.
    1. Beautiful people are often thought to lack intelligence.
    2. Older women are considered to be the most knowledgeable.
    3. Attractive people are perceived as more valuable to society.
    4. Attractive people are more likely to be bullied.

Chapter 13: Education and Employment

1. What does the Childcare Trilemma refer to? Select all that apply.
    1. The financial challenge makes it difficult to find childcare that is high quality, affordable for families, and that compensates teachers well.
    2. The problem that makes it hard for parents, children, and teachers to access healthy food.
    3. This childcare dilemma involves pay, ratios, and availability that do not provide enough income for stockholders.
    4. The dilemma that teachers face when deciding whether to stay home with their own children or return to teaching in a childcare center.
2. The Federal Student Aid system makes some assumptions about how families function.Which familial aspects do they consider? Select all that apply.
    1. The age and marital status of the applicant.
    2. The number of siblings an applicant has.
    3. Whether or not the applicant is adopted.
    4. The age and employment status of the applicant.
3. Poorly paid and unstable jobs, such as entry-level administrative support and service industry jobs, often held by women, are said to have a _____, such that it is very difficult to advance.
    1. Intersectionality
    2. Glass ceiling

3. Sticky floor
4. Middle management

4. Which of the following are aspects of care work? Select all that apply.
    1. Keeping a household running
    2. Caring for adults and children
    3. Payment
    4. Maintaining relationships with extended family
5. Which demographic trends have been observed in American families over recent decades?
    1. An increase in the nuclear family living arrangement
    2. A decrease in single-parent households
    3. An increase in the divorce rate relative to marriage rates
    4. An increase in the average age of first marriages

Chapter 14: Meaning and Purpose

1. What are some similar values and beliefs in Maslow's model and the Blackfoot model of human needs? Select all that apply.
    1. Kinship helps you transcend the self.
    2. Kinship with family is more important than cultural and collective achievement.
    3. Belonging and love help someone feel a sense of meaning.
    4. Kinship is less important than meaning.
2. Which of the following statements is true about the results of the "Meaning in 17 Advanced Countries" study? Select all that apply.
    1. Men were more likely than women to indicate family or children as meaningful in their lives.
    2. Older adults were more likely to indicate health and retirement as meaningful in their lives.
    3. People with lower levels of education and income were more likely to rate family as meaning-makers.
    4. Young adults were more likely to mention community as meaningful in their lives.
3. Which of the following statements is correct about creativity? Select all that apply.
    1. It is a healthy way to cope with trauma.
    2. It involves looking at things in a new way.
    3. It must introduce new ideas.
    4. It is a part of generativity in middle adulthood.
4. Which of the following describes the impact of forced assimilation at Indian boarding schools? Select all that apply.
    1. Trauma from physical and sexual abuse.
    2. Unmarked graves with thousands of bodies.
    3. Death of Indigenous languages and cultures.
    4. Economic self-sufficiency.

Answer Key

Chapter 1: Social Constructions

1. Which demographic trends have been observed in American families over recent decades?
    1. An increase in the nuclear family living arrangement
    2. A decrease in single-parent households
    3. An increase in the divorce rate relative to marriage rates
    4. An increase in the average age of first marriages (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: People are marrying later, and this trend contributes to the declining rate of marriage in the U.S.
2. Which statement best summarizes the impact of industrialization on family structures?
    1. Industrialization led to the universal adoption of the nuclear family model.
    2. Industrialization had no significant impact on family structures or gender roles.
    3. Industrial capitalism created separate spheres for women and men to labor. (correct)
    4. Families became less important as economic units during industrialization.
    5. Answer feedback: During industrialization, gender roles or separate spheres emerged in middle – and upper-income households. It became more common for men to work outside of the home in the labor market, and women were socially rewarded for unpaid household labor.
3. When we talk about social constructions, we mean that:

1. People create meaning through social interactions. (correct)
2. Social problems do not have real consequences.
3. Each individual has their version of the truth.
4. People have good and bad habits.
5. Answer feedback: Social constructionism is a theory that describes how people create meaning through their experiences and social interactions. This is different from the idea that social phenomena do not really exist or are too individualized to study systematically.

4. Which U.S. Supreme Court ruling(s) illustrates the government's influence on family formation and challenges the notion of universally applicable rights within marriage and family law? Select all that apply.
    1. The unanimous 1967 Loving v. Virginia ruling which declared state laws banning interracial marriage unconstitutional. (correct)
    2. The Child and Dependent Care Credit legislation defines a family based on economic dependency rather than biological or marital connections.
    3. The decision to enforce the Page Act of 1875, which restricted Chinese women from entering the U.S.
    4. The 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision legalized same-sex marriage across all states. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Not all of the above are Supreme Court decisions. Legislation is contained in the U.S. Congress, and enforcement is directed by the President and the various cabinet offices. Each institution often implements policies that make family life more difficult.

Chapter 2: Studying Families

1. Which of the following are considered to be critical dispositions for learning about families and equity? Select all that apply.
    1. Willingness to question ingrained beliefs (correct)
    2. Openness to new ideas and ways of thinking (correct)
    3. Preference to work alone rather than in diverse groups
    4. Willingness to be uncomfortable during the learning process (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Dispositions are ways of integrating new information. If you approach a new topic with the right disposition, you will be able to absorb new scientific information and understand other people's lived experiences.
2. You receive a questionnaire from your school's health center asking for information about your health and mental health using an online form. This is an example of which type of research design?
    1. Survey (correct)
    2. Experiments
    3. Observation
    4. Existing data
    5. Answer feedback: Surveys collect data from participants using a questionnaire. Surveys use self-report rather than observing people in public locations. Finally, survey design is a way to create new scientific data, rather than using existing data.
3. Which of the following statements best reflects the concept of diversity in families presented in the chapter?
    1. Diversity is limited to observable characteristics such as race and ethnicity of family members.
    2. Diversity is based solely on the family's socioeconomic status.
    3. Diversity encompasses a broad range of dimensions that emphasize the complexity and intersectionality of individual and collective identities within families. (correct)
    4. The primary focus of diversity within families is on gender and sexual orientation, with other dimensions playing secondary roles in shaping family dynamics and individual experiences.
    5. Answer feedback: No single aspect of diversity is more important, and it is the complex intersections of these dimensions of diversity that shape people's experiences in the world.
4. Which statement best describes the relationship between socioeconomic status and an individual's or family's life experiences in the United States?
    1. Socioeconomic status does not significantly impact life experiences or opportunities.
    2. Social mobility is easily achieved through hard work.
    3. Socioeconomic status is critical in determining opportunities, life experiences, and position. (correct)
    4. Socioeconomic status is determined only by an individual's income.
    5. Answer feedback: Socioeconomic status includes material wealth, educational status, and occupational status. It greatly impacts one's opportunities and outcomes in life.
5. Which of the following statements best matches the structural diversity perspective?
    1. Families' needs are best met through the structure of the traditional nuclear family
    2. Families are shaped by social structures in differing ways (correct)
    3. Families are the same, regardless of race, gender, class, and social structures.

4. Families from oppressed groups have no power to make choices and meet their needs.
5. Answer feedback: The structural diversity perspective points out that families are socially constructed. Nevertheless, families are impacted by social structures and the actions of individual family members.

6. Which of the following statements is a part of the definition of a social problem? Select all that apply.
    1. It has negative consequences for large numbers of people. (correct)
    2. It relates to people's communication and social life.
    3. It is a social construction.
    4. It must be solved through collective action, not individual behavior change. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Social problems have negative consequences for large numbers of people and must be solved through collective action. They differ from individual problems, which can sometimes be solved through individual behavior change.

Chapter 3: Connection, Community, Love, and Partnering

1. According to family theories, why are close social relationships important? Select all that apply.
    1. They act as social support networks during times of stress. (correct)
    2. Popular people tend to live longer.
    3. Connection is a human need. (correct)
    4. Chosen families support the healthy development of people who are LGBTQ+. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Abraham Maslow's and Indigenous people's needs theories, as well as the Ecological Systems theories, illustrate the need for close social relationships.
2. Which statement(s) describes binary systems and their impact on society? Select all that apply.
    1. Binary systems accurately categorize human experiences and identities without exceptions.
    2. Binary systems simplify complex human experiences into two opposing categories. (correct)
    3. Binary systems can lead to stereotypes and erase the existence of those who do not fit neatly into these categories. (correct)
    4. Binary systems easily accommodate a wide range of human identities and experiences.
    5. Answer feedback: Binary notions mask the complicated realities of human beings. They erase the existence of multiracial or mixed-race and nonbinary people, who may identify with neither or with multiple identity categories. See Socially Constructed Binary Systems.
3. According to assortative mating, people choose partners based on what primary focus?Select all that apply.
    1. Choosing partners based on their financial assets and material possessions.
    2. Choosing mates who are significantly different from themselves.
    3. Choosing partners who are more like themselves than if mates were assigned randomly. (correct)
    4. Selecting mates purely based on physical attractiveness and sexual attraction.
    5. Answer feedback: People tend to choose intimate partners who are like themselves in education, socioeconomic status, and other factors. People do not choose their intimate partners at random.
4. Which of the following best describes the evolution of marriage in the United States? Select all that apply.
    1. The concept of marriage has remained fairly static over time.
    2. Marriage historically focused on economic and familial stability. (correct)
    3. Today, people seek flexibility and self-actualization in marriage. (correct)
    4. Marriage has always been centered around the idea of self-actualization and personal happiness.
    5. Answer feedback: Marriage is a social construction, and its meaning changes over time. Historically, marriage was about economic and family stability, with "love marriages" discouraged. Now, marriage is more about flexibility and pursuing goals with a partner.
5. The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Obergefell v. Hodges established that the right to marry is fundamental and must be extended equally to all couples, thereby eliminating all legal inequities and societal stigma associated with same-sex marriage.
    1. True (correct)
    2. False
    3. Answer feedback: The Supreme Court decision in Obergefell v. Hodges legalized same-sex marriage across the United States, requiring all states, districts, and territories to perform and recognize the marriages of same-sex couples.
6. What has research indicated about the psychological consequences of divorce? Select all that apply.
    1. The effects of poverty, which many women and children face after divorce, affects them negatively. (correct).
    2. Divorced spouses experience improved psychological well-being right after divorce.
    3. The mental health of divorced spouses often declines immediately after divorce but may improve over time. (correct)
    4. Divorce has no significant psychological effects on spouses.
    5. Answer feedback: The time period examined is critical. For many, psychological well-being may decline in the immediate

aftermath of a divorce but rise over the next few years.

Chapter 4: Nurturance, Parenting, and Caregiving

1. Which of the following is true about caregiving in kinship and family life? Select all that apply.
    1. Only biological parents are recognized as caregivers in families.
    2. People receive care only when they are young.
    3. Children may take on caregiving roles throughout their lives. (correct)
    4. Caregiving may come from grandparents, adoptive, foster, and other non-biological relationships. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: People in diverse roles from parents, grandparents, stepparents, foster parents, and adoptive parents offer care. Although children often care for parents in their late adulthood, children care for their parents and one another throughout their lives.
2. According to ecological systems theory, which is the most comprehensive system that classifies COVID-19's impact on family and child development? Select all that apply.
    1. The microsystem
    2. The mesosystem
    3. The macrosystem
    4. The chronosystem (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Ecological systems theory classifies the impact of social forces on individuals. COVID-19 is a historical event that structured the chronosystem. It was an event that altered time for all living people.
3. What one factor is believed to contribute to the declining birth, fertility, and fecundity rates in the United States? Select all that apply.
    1. Longer life expectancy
    2. Economic challenges
    3. Higher rates of divorce
    4. There is no one deciding factor (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: There does not seem to be one deciding factor that influences the decision not to have children, with the majority of childless adults saying that "they just don't want to have children" (Brown, 2021).
4. How does public policy affect parent-child attachment? Select all that apply
    1. Policies have no direct impact on family dynamics or attachment.
    2. Policies supporting traditional family structures enhance attachment in those families.
    3. Policies can unintentionally damage family attachments and security. (correct)
    4. Family separation policies are designed to damage family attachment directly. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Public policy can have intentional or unintentional impact on parent-child attachment. The family separation policy designed by a white nationalist and senior White House advisor Stephen Miller explicitly harms immigrant families.
5. How are adults without children perceived in society? Select all that apply.
    1. Reasonable, rational people
    2. Selfish (correct)
    3. Less masculine or feminine (correct)
    4. Living the American Dream
    5. Answer feedback: Increased awareness and acceptance do not equate with the disappearance of social stigma. Harmful viewpoints that equate with the idea that one's life is not "complete" until they have children still exist.

Chapter 5: Routines, Traditions, and Culture

1. Which of the following are true about the benefits of routines? Select all that apply.
    1. Family routines can reduce anxiety by giving children a sense of stability and security. (correct)
    2. Adolescents are less susceptible to experiencing depression and have fewer mental health problems when engaged in family routines. (correct)
    3. Children are more likely to develop extroverted personalities if they have routines in their lives.
    4. Children can develop a sense of predictability from routines and this contributes to self-regulation. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Routines are helpful for children and families. They support mental health and self-regulation for individuals and bring connectedness to family members.
2. Which of the following can be characterized as a routine rather than a ritual? Select all that apply.
    1. Praying for the safety of family members before you go to sleep each night. (Correct)
    2. The daily practice of a family eating dinner together. (Correct)

3. A quinceañera to celebrate a young girl's coming of age.
4. A celebration of life event to acknowledge the passing of a loved one.
5. Answer feedback: Routines are everyday activities. Rituals like celebrations like weddings and birthdays happen at special points in a person's life.

3. Which of the following are true of having a sense of belonging? Select all that apply.
    1. Feeling like an important part of a family, workplace, or other social system leads to positive psychosocial aspects. (correct)
    2. Aligning with a cultural identity or subculture fosters a feeling of belonging. (correct)
    3. Belonging comes from a set of competencies people use to love others.
    4. Feelings of belonging are limited to nuclear families.
    5. Answer feedback: Because minoritization attacks a sense of belonging to the world in which a person lives, the greater a person feels an internal sense of belonging, the better they are able to weather an oppressive context.
4. According to theorist John Berry, there are four acculturation strategies. Which of the following describes people who use assimilation? Select all that apply.
    1. They do not seek to maintain their cultural identity and instead pursue close interaction with other cultures. (correct)
    2. They wish to maintain their original culture as members of an ethnocultural group.
    3. They take on the norms, values, and traditions of the new society. (correct)
    4. They take on elements of both their original culture and their new social context.
    5. Answer feedback: Berry's theory offers four broad strategies that immigrants use as they navigate changes to their cultural context. Assimilation refers to letting one's original culture go and instead pursuing a new cultural identity similar to a new cultural context.

Chapter 6: Representation and Belonging in Social Systems

1. Which of the following reasons describe why the U.S. Census is important to families? Select all that apply.
    1. It is the only data available on large groups of families.
    2. It is intended to collect data from U.S. citizens, only.
    3. It launched the American Community Survey, which provides detailed information on family dynamics. (correct)
    4. It is used to determine how federal funding for families is distributed. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Because of the scale of the census, it is an important source of data, but there are many other data sets. One is the American Community Survey, which grew out of the Census and offers social science researchers data on families across the nation.
2. My _____ describes my relationship to power and privilege in society. Select all that apply.
    1. Social location (correct)
    2. Social identity
    3. Social structure
    4. Microaggression
    5. Answer feedback: A social location describes your relationship to power and privilege in society. Each person occupies a social location in which some of their identities are privileged and other identities are oppressed.
3. What is the proper role of an ally in social justice movements like Black Lives Matter? Select all that apply.
    1. Remaining neutral and unbiased.
    2. Using one's privilege to speak for people who are voiceless.
    3. Listening to the perspectives of people with lived experience and the least power. (correct)
    4. Asking questions to oppressed people to understand their oppression better.
    5. Answer feedback: Allies should not be in charge of social justice movements. Rather, the focus should be on the group for whom the movement advocates – centering the voices of people who have lived experience and with the least power.

Chapter 7: Health and Health Care

1. Which of the following is true concerning social perception and the stigmatization of disease? Select all that apply.
    1. Societal perception does not significantly influence the stigmatization of disease.
    2. Diseases with a high level of awareness face no stigma.
    3. The stigma around certain diseases, like lung cancer, can lead to discrimination in care. (correct)
    4. Stigma is more common in diseases that are well-researched
    5. Answer feedback: Stigma can have negative consequences for the treatment of lung cancer in research, advocacy, and public policy. People with lung cancer may experience anxiety and depression. They may believe that healthcare providers are biased against them.

2. Which of the following contributes to worse health for some groups in society? Select all that apply.
    1. Poverty
    2. Inadequate access to healthcare
    3. Individual and behavioral factors
    4. High education levels (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Higher levels of education are associated with a longer life and access to information to make appropriate health decisions (Liao et al., 1999; Jemal et al., 2008; Breese et al., 2007).
3. The Affordable Care Act led to an increase in the number of people with health insurance. Gaps in coverage remain for which groups of people? Select all that apply.
    1. People over the age of 65.
    2. People living in states that did not expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. (correct)
    3. People who are pregnant.
    4. People who need insurance to cover dental and vision problems. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: The Affordable Care Act expanded Medicaid to cover more adults, like pregnant people and people over the age of 65. Medicaid does not cover dental and vision problems, leaving broad gaps in coverage for important body parts.

Chapter 8: Housing

1. After trending downward since 1780, the average number of people per household in the U.S. is beginning to trend upward.
    1. True (correct)
    2. False
    3. Answer feedback: Household size had declined from 1790 through 2010, going from an average size of 5.79 people to 2.58 people. Since 2010, it has trended upward due to financial crises and the rise of multi-generational households.
2. Which of the following describes how the Bracero and H-2 visa programs function? Select all that apply.
    1. The programs offer paths to establishing residency or citizenship in the United States.
    2. The programs offered comfortable housing in good neighborhoods.
    3. The programs employ people throughout the year.
    4. In many cases, guest workers were isolated and were prevented from having visitors. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: The Bracero and H-2 visa programs provided temporary visas for guest workers. The Bracero programs were infamous for isolating workers, preventing them from having visitors, and abusing human rights.
3. Lending institutions and the federal government created maps that designated the places where people of color and foreign-born individuals lived as too “dangerous” or “risky” to receive housing loans. Which terms best describe this practice?
    1. The Fair Housing Act
    2. Redlining (correct)
    3. Residential segregation (correct)
    4. Bluelining
    5. Answer feedback: Redlining means refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable or racially occupied. This results in residential segregation. Despite the Fair Housing Act, banks still discriminate against families of color.
4. Which of the following are principles of the Housing First approach to ending houselessness? Select all that apply.
    1. Housing is a human right. (correct)
    2. All people are “ready for housing.” (correct)
    3. People must be sober and employed before they can be housed.
    4. Group homes are just as good as independent housing.
    5. Answer feedback: Housing First differs from traditional approaches by providing housing rather than getting a person “ready for housing.” Housing First does not condition housing on sobriety, employment, or other factors. All human beings have the right to a home.

Chapter 9: Safety and Stability

1. Which of the following are listed as one of the ten Protective and Compensatory Experiences (PACEs) that help children develop resilience? Select all that apply.
    1. An adult mentor outside of the family unit who provides guidance and support. (correct)
    2. Regular opportunities to help others, through volunteering or participation in other community projects. (correct)
    3. Access to the Internet for educational purposes.
    4. Engagement in hobbies, such as playing a musical instrument. (correct)

5. Answer feedback: Although Internet access is important, it is not a protective or compensatory experience. Adult mentorship, opportunities to help others, and hobbies, among other activities, can help children develop resilience to life's challenges.

2. Which of the following are benefits of paid parental leave for families? Select all that apply.
    1. Healthy attachment and bonding with a newborn. (correct)
    2. Physical recovery from expecting, birthing, or caring for a new child. (correct)
    3. Feeling safe that one's income will not change while caring for a new child. (correct)
    4. Increased support from external family members such as grandparents.
    5. Answer feedback: Parental leave and social safety net programs support family bonding. Yet from the earliest stages of life, comprehensive policies are absent to support families in the U.S. Families can't experience a true sense of safety without social support.
3. Research suggests that the trauma experienced by Holocaust survivors can be passed down to their descendants through biological means, specifically through epigenetics.
    1. True (correct)
    2. False
    3. Answer feedback: A 2016 study found evidence of epigenetic changes transmitted across generations to descendants of Holocaust survivors. This was the first human evidence that intergenerational trauma may also have a biological mechanism (Yehuda et al., 2015).
4. Which of the following statements describes a benefit of educating people about abuse and neglect? Select all that apply.
    1. Education prevents people from becoming abusers
    2. Education helps people identify early warning signs of abuse. (correct)
    3. Education helps people create healthy relationships. (correct)
    4. Education provides an effective deterrent to abuse and neglect.
    5. Answer feedback: The purpose of intimate partner violence education is to help build connections between people. Education cannot prevent abuse, but people can recognize healthy intimacy and look out for early warning signs of abuse in friends and loved ones.

Chapter 10: Food and Water

1. Which of the following statements describes a food desert?
    1. A rural area that has a grocery store within 5 miles of where most people live.
    2. An urban area that has less than one grocery store per mile. (correct)
    3. An urban area with mostly fast food and convenience stores.
    4. A rural area with fewer than 5 grocery stores.
    5. Answer feedback: Food deserts lack access to nutritious food. A food desert is a geographic area where 33 percent of the population live more than 1 mile (urban areas) or 10 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store.
2. What was the poverty line calculation based on initially (1963)?
    1. Total monthly expenses on housing and utilities.
    2. Three times the cost of the lowest-cost food plan that provides the required nutrients. (correct)
    3. The average income of a lower-middle-class family.
    4. Total monthly expenses, including housing, food, and utilities.
    5. Answer feedback: In 1963, the poverty line was designated at three times the economy food plan, and it was assumed "that the housewife will be a careful shopper, a skillful cook, and a good manager who will prepare all the family's meals at home" (Fremstad, 2019).
3. Which of the following statements concerning early food experiences is correct? Select all that apply.
    1. People who were not exposed to various foods as children may become picky eaters. (correct)
    2. Children who do not practice socializing during meals may struggle with social norms at the dining table. (correct)
    3. Children may eat more processed foods if they see their friends do so. (correct)
    4. Children are not influenced by commercials promoting certain snack foods.
    5. Answer feedback: Children's eating habits are formed by their environment – from friends, media, and family members.
4. What was the primary reason Flint city officials changed the water source from the Detroit Water and Sewage Department to the Flint River in 2014?
    1. The water from the Detroit River was contaminated.
    2. The city was looking for a higher-quality water source.
    3. To save money due to the city's financial crisis. (correct)
    4. The Detroit Water and Sewage Department ceased operations.
    5. Answer feedback: The city declared a state of emergency and wanted to save money. Water from the Flint River was a

cheap alternative until they could use a pipeline from the Huron River. However, the water was not treated properly and caused spikes of lead in the water.

5. The formation of the United States led to the restriction of Native Americans to reservations, the enslavement of African immigrants, and discriminatory laws against immigrants, all of which continue to affect families today.
    1. True (correct)
    2. False
    3. Answer feedback: The discrimination that immigrants, African-Americans, Native Americans, and other groups face today in the United States is grounded in the cultural and policy discrimination from history.

Chapter 11: Justice

1. Which of the following statistics is true about families impacted by incarceration?
    1. Half of all adults in the United States have had an immediate family member incarcerated. (correct)
    2. Black adults are less likely than White adults to have a family member incarcerated.
    3. Middle and upper-income families are more likely to have a family member incarcerated.
    4. Latinx adults are twice as likely as White adults to have a family member incarcerated. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Incarceration is highly racialized, with Black adults three times and Latinx adults twice as likely as White adults to have a family member incarcerated. Nevertheless, the experience of incarceration is common for half of all families.
2. Which of the following statistics is accurate about sexual violence by police officers? Select all that apply.
    1. Sexual assault is the least commonly reported form of police misconduct.
    2. 32% of African-American transgender women in police custody report being sexually assaulted by police. (correct)
    3. Less than 1,000 police officers have lost their jobs due to sexual misconduct since 2010.
    4. Black men are 10% less likely to be victims of police sexual violence than White men.
    5. Answer feedback: Sexual assault is a commonly reported form of police misconduct. Over 1,000 police officers have lost their jobs for sexual misconduct since 2010. African-American transgender women in police custody report an alarmingly high rate of sexual violence.
3. Which of the following statements is accurate about substance use and mental health disorders? Select all that apply.
    1. People of color and White people use drugs at about the same rate. (correct)
    2. Substance use disorders are always caused by trauma.
    3. Continuing to use drugs despite negative consequences is a sign of a substance use disorder. (correct)
    4. Mental health diagnoses and substance use disorders are unrelated to each other.
    5. Answer feedback: Mental health and substance use are related in complicated ways, though it is not the case that all drug use is caused by trauma. Continuing to use drugs is a sign of a substance use disorder. Drug use is equivalent across racial and ethnic groups.
4. Which of the following statements about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program is correct?
    1. DACA provides a permanent pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
    2. DACA provides a green card for students seeking to attend a university in the United States.
    3. DACA is available to immigrants who entered the United States after 2013.
    4. DACA serves 25% fewer people in 2024 than it did in 2012. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: DACA is a program that declines to enforce existing laws that require the deportation of children who arrived in the country without documentation prior to 2013. It does not provide a permanent pathway to citizenship or a green card.

Chapter 12: Visual Culture

1. Which of the following statements is correct about artistic representations of families? Select all that apply.
    1. Art education influences students' ability to tell fact from fiction. (correct)
    2. Art history is often told by Indigenous people and those with the least power.
    3. Art that is displayed publicly (museums, history books, media, etc.) most often represents the dominant culture. (correct)
    4. Art invites critical discussion and other viewpoints. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Art history and education often reproduce the power dynamics in society, over-representing the dominant culture. Yet art students are better able to distinguish fact from fiction. They engage open and critical discussion provoked by artistic expression.
2. Which of the following is correct about public art? Select all that apply.
    1. Public art is always controlled by the government.
    2. Public art is intended to represent universal concepts. (correct)

3. Public art is often determined by power in the dominant culture. (correct)
4. Public art must be accessible to the public (correct)
5. Answer feedback: Public art is for everyone. It must be accessible to the public and represent universally accepted concepts. While it is not controlled by the government, it is often determined by power structures in society, reproducing the dominant culture's ideology.

3. "Green Book"is a 2018 film that was criticized for telling a story about anti-Black discrimination of a famous musician through the experiences of a White driver who defends him against oppression. What "White-centered" issues did critics note with the film? Select all that apply.
   1. It was primarily told from a White person's point of view. (correct)
   2. The lead actor was White. (correct)
   3. A White Savior character helps fix racist experiences. (correct)
   4. It used outdated racial stereotypes.
   5. Answer feedback: Although the film dealt frankly with the racism experienced by the characters, the White character's role was to tell the story and save the person of color from racism.
4. In the classic Disney movie "Sleeping Beauty" (1959), the princess is revived from an evil spell by her true love's kiss. Which of the following describes how gender is represented in this film?
   1. Emphasized femininity (correct)
   2. Beauty ideals (correct)
   3. Objectification (correct)
   4. Implicit bias
   5. Answer feedback: Gender in film emphasizes traditionally feminine traits like beauty, which objectify the woman and leave her inner world unexplored.
5. How does the halo effect indicate attractiveness is associated with positive traits? Select all that apply.
   1. Beautiful people are often thought to lack intelligence.
   2. Older women are considered to be the most knowledgeable.
   3. Attractive people are perceived as more valuable to society. (correct)
   4. Attractive people are more likely to be bullied.
   5. Answer feedback: The halo effect is a cognitive bias in our society that perceives attractive people as more valuable and worthy than those with attributes deemed ugly or abnormal.

Chapter 13: Education and Employment

1. What does the Childcare Trilemma refer to? Select all that apply.
   1. The financial challenge makes it difficult to find childcare that is high quality, affordable for families, and that compensates teachers well. (correct)
   2. The problem that makes it hard for parents, children, and teachers to access healthy food.
   3. This childcare dilemma involves pay, ratios, and availability that do not provide enough income for stockholders.
   4. The dilemma that teachers face when deciding whether to stay home with their own children or return to teaching in a childcare center.
   5. Answer feedback: The childcare trilemma includes three elements in constant tension. In our present system, we observe difficulty accessing high-quality child care, high cost of tuition, and low pay for teachers.
2. The Federal Student Aid system makes some assumptions about how families function.Which familial aspects do they consider? Select all that apply.
   1. The age and marital status of the applicant. (correct)
   2. The number of siblings an applicant has.
   3. Whether or not the applicant is adopted.
   4. The age and employment status of the applicant.
   5. Answer feedback: The FAFSA application asks about some aspects of family diversity, but it makes assumptions about the age and marital status of the applicant.
3. Poorly paid and unstable jobs, such as entry-level administrative support and service industry jobs, often held by women, are said to have a _____, such that it is very difficult to advance.
   1. Intersectionality
   2. Glass ceiling
   3. Sticky floor (correct)
   4. Middle management
   5. Answer feedback: Any parent may face gaps in career progression, but women face societal expectations and the physical labor of pregnancy and childbirth. Black women face additional challenges such as less access to health care for themselves and their children.

4. Which of the following are aspects of care work? Select all that apply.
    1. Keeping a household running (correct)
    2. Caring for adults and children (correct)
    3. Payment
    4. Maintaining relationships with extended family (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Expectations that women have an instinct for caregiving pressures them to perform more care work. Care work is added to the requirement that they have a full-time job. The pandemic exacerbated this trend and many working mothers left the workforce.
5. Which demographic trends have been observed in American families over recent decades?
    1. An increase in the nuclear family living arrangement
    2. A decrease in single-parent households
    3. An increase in the divorce rate relative to marriage rates
    4. An increase in the average age of first marriages (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: People are marrying later, and this trend contributes to the declining rate of marriage in the U.S.

Chapter 14: Meaning and Purpose

1. What are some similar values and beliefs in Maslow's model and the Blackfoot model of human needs? Select all that apply.
    1. Kinship helps you transcend the self. (correct)
    2. Kinship with family is more important than cultural and collective achievement.
    3. Belonging and love help someone feel a sense of meaning. (correct)
    4. Kinship is less important than meaning.
    5. Answer feedback: Maslow's model and the Blackfoot model of human needs identify the importance of belonging and love in finding a sense of meaning and purpose. In turn, a person transcends themselves and feels a greater connection with the universe or a higher power.
2. Which of the following statements is true about the results of the "Meaning in 17 Advanced Countries" study? Select all that apply.
    1. Men were more likely than women to indicate family or children as meaningful in their lives.
    2. Older adults were more likely to indicate health and retirement as meaningful in their lives. (correct)
    3. People with lower levels of education and income were more likely to rate family as meaning-makers.
    4. Young adults were more likely to mention community as meaningful in their lives. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Young adults rate peers and community as more meaningful than health and retirement, in contrast to older adults. Although there are relationships between gender, education, and meaning, they are not correctly listed here.
3. Which of the following statements is correct about creativity? Select all that apply.
    1. It is a healthy way to cope with trauma. (correct)
    2. It involves looking at things in a new way. (correct)
    3. It must introduce new ideas.
    4. It is a part of generativity in middle adulthood. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Creativity can come in many forms. It does not refer only to the production of new ideas. Creative expression helps us to think flexibly, cope with trauma, and develop a sense of meaning that helps one feel a sense of generativity in middle adulthood.
4. Which of the following describes the impact of forced assimilation at Indian boarding schools?
    1. Trauma from physical and sexual abuse. (correct)
    2. Unmarked graves with thousands of bodies. (correct)
    3. Death of Indigenous languages and cultures. (correct)
    4. Economic self-sufficiency.
    5. Answer feedback: The United States used Indian boarding schools to commit cultural genocide, erasing Indian culture and removing families from the development of their children. The dehumanizing logic underlying this process created horrific abuses and murders.

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Image Descriptions

3

Image Description for Figure 1.5

Bar chart visualizing the data in the following table:

Family Structure	1960	1980	2014
Two parents, first marriage	73%	61%	46%
Two parents remarried	14%	16%	15%
Single parent	9%	19%	26%
No parent	4%	4%	5%
Cohabiting parent	N/A	N/A	7%

Notes: Data regarding cohabitation are not available for 1960 and 1980. In those years, children with cohabiting parents are included under “single parent.”

Data source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1960 and 1980 Decennial Census and 2014 American Community Survey (IPUMS). https://www.pewresearch.org/social-t...-family-today/

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Image Description for Figure 1.6

Line chart from the US Census Bureau shows age at first marriage.This dipped down from 26 for men and 22 for women in 1890 to about 20 for women and 22 for men in the 1950s and ‘60s. The lines then rise quickly to 2020, when there is again a slight dip downwards. In 2022, the median age of first marriage was about 30 for men and 28 for women.

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1890-1940, and Current Population Survey, Annual Economics Supplements, 1947-2022. Note: Starting in 2019, estimates for marriage now include same-sex married couples.

Return to Figure 1.6

Image Description for Figure 1.7

Rate per 1,000 total population. Bar chart of marriage and divorce rates.

Data table

Year	Marriage Rate	Divorce Rate
1990	9.8	4.7
1995	8.9	4.4
2000	8.2	4.0
2005	7.6	3.6
2010	6.8	3.6
2015	6.9	3.1
2020	5.1	2.3

Data sources

National marriage and divorce rate trends for 2000-2020 (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage-divorce.htm) and Monthly Vital Statistics Reports (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/mvsr.htm). Recent data are provisional. See CDC sources for full notes.

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Image Description for Figure 1.9

A bar chart shows that the number of people living in multigenerational households (represented in millions) increased steadily from around 15 million in 1971 to 60 million in 2021.

Notes

Data are represented in ten year intervals. Multigenerational households include at least two generations of adults mainly 25 and older or grandparents and grandchildren younger than 25.

Data source

“Financial Issues Top the List of Reasons U.S. Adults Live in Multigenerational Homes,” Pew Research Center analysis of Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) data files for 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011, and 2021(IPUMS).

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Image Description for Figure 1.17

A wheel with three rings divided into sections of attributes.

Inner ring

These are individual characteristics. Attributes include:

- Values
- Beliefs
- Motivations
- Skills
- Behaviors
- Goals

Middle ring

These are social identities. Attributes include:

- Nationality
- First Language
- Religion
- Ability
- Neurodiversity
- Health
- Body size
- Age
- Sex
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Race
- Culture
- Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic Status (SES)
- Geography

Outer Ring

These are roles and relationships. Attributes include:

- Job
- Hobbies
- Family
- Friendships
- Professional
- Interests

Return to Figure 1.17

Image Description for Figure 1.22

A flower-like visualization with a semi-opaque circle in the middle. Rainbow-colored ovals radiate from the middle like petals. These overlap with the oval on either side and with the circle in the middle. Each oval has one of the following social identities written in it:

- Nationality
- First Language
- Religion
- Ability
- Neurodiversity
- Health
- Body size
- Age
- Sex
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Race
- Culture
- Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic Status (SES)
- Geography

Return to Figure 1.22

Image Description for Figure 2.3

"The Scientific Process" A circle of arrows around the words Scientific Process. The top arrow says Identify a Social Issue or Find a Research Topic and Ask a Question. This points to the next arrow, which says review existing literature and sources. Build a broad understanding of work previously conducted, identify gaps in understanding of the topic, and position your own research to build on prior knowledge. The next arrow says Formulate a Hypothesis: What are the general causes of the phenomenon you're wondering about? The next arrow says Select a Research Method and Design a Study: Select a research method appropriate to answer your question. Typically, your research question influences the method you will use. The next arrow says Collect data: Collect information on the topic using the research design. The next arrow says Analyze data: Organize and analyze the data after it is collected. If the analysis does or does not support the hypothesis, discuss implications for theory or policy. From here there is an arrow that goes back to Select a Research Method that says Based on findings, what new questions do you have? How can these new questions help develop future projects? Another arrow from Analyze Data continues the circle and says Report Findings: Share results at conferences and in academic journals. Before the conclusions of a study are widely accepted, the studies are often repeated. New research questions may emerge to inspire more research projects. This arrow points back to the top arrow where we started. There is also an attribution statement saying this image is CC BY 4.0 and created by Jennifer Puentes and Michaela Willi Hooper.

Return to Figure 2.3

Image Description for Figure 2.14

The theories in the book are represented by icons and brief definitions.

- Ecological Systems Theory states that individuals are part of a group of concentric systems, impacting their development. It's symbolized by a series of six concentric circles.
- Social Exchange Theory states that individuals enter into relationships via the evaluation of costs and benefits. It's symbolized by scales.
- Life Course Theory states that individual actions are influenced by their linked lives, social & historical events. It's symbolized by a globe.
- Structural Diversity Theory states that social structures shape all families, but in different ways. It's symbolized by a wheel shape with concentric circles.
- Feminist Theory states that society is structured in a way that privileges men over women; goal is to transform inequalities. It's symbolized by the equals sign.
- Postmodernist Theory states that society emphasizes choice, reflexivity and individuality. It's symbolized by a question mark.
- Symbolic Interactionist Theory states that the changing nature of social symbols affects current and future interactions. It's symbolized by the icon of a landline phone with an arrow pointing to a smartphone.

Return to Figure 2.14

Image Description for Figure 3.1

Two triangles next to each other. The first triangle represents the western perspective. From bottom to top, the levels are:

- Physiological
- Safety
- Belongingness/Love
- Esteem
- Know/Understand
- Aesthetic
- Self-actualization
- Transcendence

The second triangle represents the First Nations' perspective. From bottom to top, the levels are:

- Self actualization
- Community actualization
- Cultural perpetuity

Return to Figure 3.1

Image Description for Figure 3.16

A bar chart shows that unmarried, female-headed households have a much higher rate of poverty (37.2%) compared to unmarried, male-headed households (18.1%), or married couple households (the lowest, at 6.7%).

Data source: Table A-2. Families and People in Poverty by Type of Family: 2020 and 2021. US Census Bureau: https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/demo/p60-277.html

Design by Elizabeth Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

Return to Figure 3.16

Image Description for Figure 4.10

A line chart shows the number of births in millions and the fertility rate per 1000 women aged 15-44. Both lines went down in the mid-'90s and up around 2006. They then steadily declined, with a slight bump around 2014, until 2020. There was a slight uptick in 2021.

Data table

Year	Number of births	Fertility Rate
2021	3,659,289	56.6
2020	3,613,647	56.0
2019	3,747,540	58.3

Year	Number of births	Fertility Rate
2018	3,791,712	59.1
2017	3,853,472	60.2
2016	3,945,875	62.0
2015	3,978,497	62.5
2014	3,988,076	62.9
2013	3,932,181	62.5
2012	3,952,841	63.0
2011	3,953,590	63.2
2010	3,999,386	64.1
2009	4,130,665	66.2
2008	4,247,694	68.6
2007	4,316,233	69.5
2006	4,265,555	68.5
2005	4,138,349	66.7
2004	4,112,052	66.3
2003	4,089,950	66.1

Year	Number of births	Fertility Rate
2002	4,021,726	64.8
2001	4,025,933	66.9
2000	4,058,814	67.5
1999	3,664,292	65.9
1998	3,941,553	65.6
1997	3,880,894	65.0
1996	3,891,494	65.3
1995	3,899,589	65.6
1994	3,952,767	66.7
1993	4,000,240	67.6
1992	4,049,024	68.9
1991	4,094,566	69.6
1990	4,092,994	70.9

Notes and Licensing Information

Note: Data for 2021 are provisional. Data sources: National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics Rapid Release and National Vital Statistics Reports. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/index.htm

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Return to Figure 4.10

Image Description for Figure 4.11

Line chart visualizing life expectancy at birth, in years.

Data table

Year	Females	Males	Total
2014	81.3	76.5	78.9
2015	81.1	76.3	78.7
2016	81.1	76.2	78.7
2017	81.1	76.1	78.6
2018	81.2	76.2	78.7
2019	81.4	76.3	78.8
2020	79.9	74.2	77.0
2021	79.1	73.2	76.1

Data sources

Life Expectancy at Birth, by Sex: 2014–2018 data table; Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for 2020 and 2021, Vital Statistics Rapid Release, CDC.

Licensing information

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Return to Figure 4.11

Image Description for Figure 4.12

Life Expectancy at Birth (in Years) visualized as a bar chart.

Data table

Year	Hispanic/Latino	White, Not Hispanic	Black, Not Hispanic
2008	81.0	78.4	73.7
2009	81.2	78.1	74.2
2010	81.4	78.8	74.7
2011	81.6	78.8	74.9
2012	81.9	78.9	75.1
2013	81.9	78.8	75.1
2014	82.1	78.8	75.3
2015	81.9	78.7	75.1
2016	81.8	78.6	74.9
2017	81.8	78.5	74.9
2018	81.8	78.6	74.7
2019	81.9	78.8	74.8
2020	77.9	77.4	71.5
2021	77.7	76.4	70.8

Data source

Data sources: 2008–2018 United States Life Tables; Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for 2020 and 2021, Vital Statistics Rapid Release, CDC.

Licensing information

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Return to Figure 4.12

Image Description for Figure 4.24

A line chart shows that, in 2009, child poverty was measured at 20.7% by the official measure and 17% by the supplemental poverty measure (SPM). The SPM continues to be lower, and in 2021 falls steeply to 5.2%. Since 2019 the official measure has diverged from the SPM and in 2021 stands at 15.3%.

Notes: Adapted from: https://www.census.gov/library/stori...d-poverty.html. Population as of March the following year. Official* includes unrelated individuals under 15. The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) estimates for 2019 and beyond reflect the implementation of revised SPM methodology. The data for 2017 and beyond used an updated processing system. The data for 2013 and beyond use different questions about income. The data points are placed at the midpoints of the respective years.

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010-2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplements (CPS ASEC). See original figure for recession and methodology information.

This updated, accessible version by Elizabeth Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper,

Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

Return to Figure 4.24

Image Description for Figure 5.2

Two circles intersect in a Venn diagram. One of the circles is labeled “Family

Routine.” The words and phrases inside this circle are:

- Ordinary
- Functional
- Changes based on family needs and values
- Responds to stress and transitions
- Daily life

The other circle is labeled “Family Ritual,” The words and phrases inside this circle are:

- Traditional
- Intergenerational
- Relatively unchanging across life course
- Extraordinary
- Celebratory

The intersection of the two circles includes the words and phrases:

- Symbolic
- Repetitive
- Role expectations
- Structured
- Collective identity

These concepts by Monica Olvera and design by Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

Return to Figure 5.2

Image Description for Figure 5.3

A box has four quadrants, providing a summary of the supportive or disruptive elements of family routines and rituals. Arrows point both directions on the horizontal axis, which is labeled Disruptive in one direction and Supportive in another. The vertical axis does not have arrows but is labeled Ritual Meanings and Routine Activities. Below is a table representing the categories in the image:

	Routine Activities	Ritual Meanings
Supportive	Management strategies	Belonging to the group
	Structure	Emotional containment
	Demarks time	Commitment to the future
	supported by others	Emotional lineage
	Planning	Consecration of the past
Disruptive	Rigid or chaotic	Alienation
	Resentment and obligations	Degradation
	Pressed for time	Exclusion
	Depleted energy	Coercion
	Explosive or conflictual interactions	Cutting off emotional expression

Based on ideas from Fiese, B. H. (2007). Routines and rituals: Opportunities for participation in family health. OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health, 27(1_suppl), 41S-49S. doi.org/10.1177/15394492070270S106. Design by Monica Olvera and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

Return to Figure 5.3

Image Description for Figure 5.8

A Venn diagram of four circles intersecting. The center is labeled A Sense of Belonging. The four circles are labeled Competencies, Perceptions, Opportunities, and Motivations.

Based on ideas from Allen, K.-A., Kern, M. L., Rozek, C. S., McInerney, D. M., & Slavich, G. M. (2021). Belonging: A review of

conceptual issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research. Australian Journal of Psychology, 73(1), 87–102. doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2021.1883409

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Return to Figure 5.8

Image Description for Figure 5.10

A rectangle is divided into four quadrants. The axes have arrows pointing both directions. A plus sign and the word *high* are on one end of the axes, while a minus sign and the word *low* are on the other end. The Y axis is labeled Issue 1: relationships sought among groups. The X axis is labeled Issue 2: maintenance of heritage and cultural identity.

The low seeking of relationships and low maintenance of heritage and cultural identity quadrant is labeled marginalization.

The high seeking of relationships and low maintenance of heritage and cultural identity quadrant is labeled assimilation.

The high maintenance of heritage and cultural identity and low seeking of relationships quadrant is labeled separation.

The high maintenance of heritage and cultural identity and high seeking of relationships quadrant is labeled integration.

Based on ideas from Sam, D. L., & Berry, J. W. (2010). Acculturation: When individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5(4), 472–481. doi.org/10.1177/1745691610373075

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Return to Figure 5.10

Image Description for Figure 6.9

Overview

A multicolored wheel that visualizes an individual's or group's relationship to power and privilege. From a center that says power, two intersecting lines with arrows at each end point outwards and are labeled *marginalization*. There are 16 slices or segments in the wheel. Each segment represents categories of identities or social locations. Social locations near the center of the wheel experience more power. Social locations near the edge of the wheel experience more oppression and are more marginalized. Gray words outside the circle indicate forms of oppression and discrimination directed at people with those social identities.

Please keep in mind that as we try to describe the relationships between socially constructed power and identity, the categories we use can be imprecise, overlapping, and unstable.

Category descriptions and social identities/locations

- Race/Ethnicity: Black and Indigenous People of Color are the most marginalized identities, white passing is in the middle, and white is closest to the center of power. Racism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Skin color: Dark is the most marginalized identity, medium shades in the middle, and white closest to the center of power. Colorism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Indigeneity: Indigenous is the most marginalized identity, and Settlers are closest to the center of power. Colonialism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Citizenship: Undocumented is the most marginalized, documented non-citizen is in the middle, and citizen is closest to the center of power. Nativism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Language: Non-English speaking is the most marginalized identity, English speaking is in the middle, and native English is closest to the center of power. Xenophobia is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Geography: Rural/inner city is the most marginalized identity, suburb is in the middle, and city is closest to the center of power. Classism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Social class: Poor/working poor is the most marginalized identity, middle class is in the middle, and wealthy is closest to the center of power. Classism also affects people in this category.
- Housing status: Houseless is the most marginalized identity, sheltered/renting is in the middle, and property owner is closest

to the center of power. Classism also affects people in this category.
- Education: Elementary education is the most marginalized identity, high school is in the middle, and college or university is closest to the center of power. Credentialism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Neurodiversity: Significant neurodivergence is the most marginalized identity, some neurodivergence is in the middle, and neurotypical is closest to the center of power. Ableism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Physical and mental health: Vulnerable is the most marginalized identity, mostly stable is in the middle, and robust is closest to the center of power. Ableism also affects people in this category.
- Ability: Severe disability is the most marginalized identity, mild disability is in the middle, and able-bodied is closest to the center of power. Ableism also affects people in this category.
- Body size: Overweight or obese is the most marginalized identity, average is in the middle, and slim is closest to the center of power. Sizeism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Gender identity: Trans/intersex/nonbinary is the most marginalized, cisgender women are in the middle, and cisgender men are closest to the center of power. Sexism and cisgenderism are forms of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Sexual orientation: Lesbian, bi, pan/asexual are the most marginalized identities, gay men are in the middle, and straight is closest to the center of power. Heterosexism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Marital Status: Single/nonmonogamous are the most marginalized identities, engaged/partnered are in the middle, and married is closest to the center of power. Heterosexism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.

Attributions and license

Based on the work of Patricia Hill Collins, Kimberlé Crenshaw and Allan Johnson, and the visual images of Sylvia Duckworth and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. This version designed by Kimberly Puttman, Michaela Willi Hooper, and Lauren Antrosiglio, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

Return to Figure 6.9

Image Description for Figure 6.12

A wheel with three rings divided into sections of attributes. The inner and outer are blank segments.

Middle ring

These are social identities. Attributes include:

- Nationality
- First Language
- Religion
- Ability
- Neurodiversity
- Health
- Body size
- Age
- Sex
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Race
- Culture
- Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic Status (SES)
- Geography

Return to Figure 6.12

Image Description for Figure 7.10

Image Description: Rate per 1,000 live births; 1) Non-hispanic Black, 10.8, 2) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 9.4, 3) American Indian or Alaskan Native, 8.2, 4) Hispanic, 4.9, 5) Non-Hispanic White, 4.6, 6) Asian, 3.6.

Return to Figure 7.10

Image Description for Figure 7.12

A bar chart represents percentages (crude prevalence):

- Hispanic or Latino: 32.3%
- Non-Hispanic White: 30.7%
- Non-Hispanic Black or African American: 43.5%
- Non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native: 38.2%
- Non-Hispanic Asian: 30.5%
- Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 47.0%
- Non-Hispanic Multiracial: 39.5%
- Non-Hispanic Other: 38.0%

Note: Short sleep is defined as less than 7 hours for adults. Data source: CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2020.

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Return to Figure 7.12

Image Description for Figure 7.13

A map shows that age-adjusted prevalence of adults who reported short sleep duration varied by state in 2020, ranging from 29.3% in Colorado to 42.8% in West Virginia. The map breaks the short-sleep prevalence down into four categories.

States where the age-adjusted prevalence of short-sleep duration was 37% – 42.8%

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Louisiana
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Michigan
- Mississippi
- Nevada
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- West Virginia

States where the age-adjusted prevalence of short-sleep duration was 34.7% – 36.9%

- Alaska
- Arizona
- Delaware
- Florida
- Maryland
- Missouri
- New Jersey

- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia

States where the age-adjusted prevalence of short-sleep duration was 32.9% – 34.6%

- California
- Connecticut
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New York
- North Carolina
- Utah
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

States where the age-adjusted prevalence of short-sleep duration was 29.3% – 32.8%

- Colorado
- District of Columbia
- Idaho
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Oregon
- South Dakota
- Vermont
- Washington

Data source

CDC PLACES, 2021. The model-based estimates were generated using data from CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2018, American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018, and 2018 Census county population estimates. See all data and original public domain map.

Design by Elizabeth B. Pearce and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

Return to Figure 7.13

Image Description for Figure 8.5

On a single night in 2022, there were 582,00 people who were experiencing houselessness

An infographic with the title in the middle circle, which has statistics about all people experiencing homelessness. Of all people experiencing homelessness, 40% were unsheltered and 60% were sheltered, which is represented with two bars. Four sections around the circle provide statistics about four specific groups of people experiencing houselessness.

Veterans

- Total number: 33,129

- Percent unsheltered: 59%
- Percent sheltered: 41%

People in Families with Children under 18

- Total number: 161,070
- Percent unsheltered: 10%
- Percent sheltered: 90%

Accompanied Children aged 0-18

- Total number: 95,440
- Percent unsheltered: 10%
- Percent unsheltered: 90%

Unaccompanied people aged 18-24

- Total number: 27,395
- Percent unsheltered: 43%
- Percent sheltered: 57%

Definitions

- Sheltered: refers to people who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens.
- Unsheltered: refers to people whose primary nighttime location is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people.

Data Source

"The 2022 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR)

to Congress," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Licensing information

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Return to Figure 8.5

Image Description for Figure 8.19

Two triangles next to each other. The first triangle represents the western perspective. From bottom to top, the levels are:

- Physiological
- Safety
- Belongingness/Love
- Esteem
- Know/Understand
- Aesthetic
- Self-actualization
- Transcendence

The second triangle represents the First Nations' perspective. From bottom to top, the levels are:

- Self actualization
- Community actualization
- Cultural perpetuity

Return to Figure 8.19

Image Description for Figure 9.2

Heading: The ACE Pyramid. Subheading: ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) potentially impact health outcomes later in life.

A layered pyramid is shown, starting with dark blue layers at the foundation and getting lighter toward the top. An identically-colored bar to the right shows a gradient from “Conception” at the bottom to “Death” at the top. On the pyramid, the layers read as follows from the bottom up:

1 – Generational Embodiment/Historical Trauma

2 – Social Conditions/Local Context

3 – Adverse Childhood Experiences

4 – Disrupted Neurodevelopment

5 – Social, Emotional, & Cognitive Impairment

6 – Adoption of Health Risk Behavior

7 – Disease, Disability, & Social Problems

8 – Early Death

Return to Figure 9.2

Image Description for Figure 11.8

A line chart shows the arrest rate per 100,000 people for Black people and white people from 2010 – 2018. The Black arrest rate is much higher, starting around 650, dropping to just under 500 in 2015, and then going back up to around 600 in 2018. The white arrest rate follows a similar trend but is much lower, between 100 and 200. Arrest rates were lower in 2018 than in 2010 for both Black and white people, but remained much higher for Black people.

Notes, Data Source, and Licensing Information

Note: Florida and Washington, D.C. did not provide data.

Data source: FBI/Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data and U.S. Census Data originally compiled by the ACLU in A Tale of Two Countries: Racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform: www.aclu.org/report/tale-two...d-arrests-era-

marijuana-reform

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Return to Figure 11.8

Image Description for Figure 13.6

Categories of neurodiversity often overlap with each other including these examples, 1) Dyscalculia: innovative thinking and verbal skills shares creativity with, 2) Dyslexia: visual thinking, 3D mechanic skills shares authenticity with, 3) ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder): creativity, energy and passion shares hyper-focus with, 4) Tourette Syndrome: observational skills, cognitive control, creativity and shares innovative thinking with, 5) Acquired Neurodiversity: adaptability, empathy and shares resilience with, 6) Mental Health: depth of thinking, expression and shares sensory awareness with, 7) Autism: concentration, fine detail processing and shares memory with, 8) DCD/Dyspraxia: empathy, intuition and shares verbal skills with Dyscalculia.

Return to Figure 13.6

Image Description for Figure 13.7

A heading on a note reads, “I like being Autistic because:” and is surrounded by brightly colored doodles of a yellow lightbulb and a pink brain with a red heart inside. The next part of the note reads, “The same parts of my brain that disable me, also allow me to develop multi-disciplinary talents. Nevermind savantism; I have many skills which I attribute to the exact same aspects of my neurology that handicap me. Disability is nothing to be ashamed of and the spectrum is rife with ability too!”

Return to Figure 13.7

Image Description for Figure 13.11

A bar chart shows the percentage of U.S. adults ages 18 and older who are married, by education, by decade from 1970 – 2020, broken down into four categories by education level: less than high school (hs), high school, some college, and bachelor or more.

Year	% of people with less than HS education who are married	% of people with HS education who are married	% of people with some college who are married	% of people with a bachelor’s degree or more who are married
1970	66%	75%	58%	75%
1980	59%	68%	55%	69%
1990	52%	61%	56%	66%
2000	49%	57%	56%	66%
2010	43%	49%	48%	64%
2020	44%	45%	47%	62%

Data source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1970-2000 decennial census and 2010-2021 American Community Survey (IPUMS), “The Modern American Family”

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Return to Figure 13.11

Image Description for Figure 13.18

Line chart from the US Census Bureau shows age at first marriage.This dipped down from 26 for men and 22 for women in 1890 to about 20 for women and 22 for men in the 1950s and ‘60s. The lines then rise quickly to 2020, when there is again a slight dip downwards. In 2022, the median age of first marriage was about 30 for men and 28 for women.

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1890-1940, and Current Population Survey, Annual Economics Supplements, 1947-2022. Note: Starting in 2019, estimates for marriage now include same-sex married couples.

Return to Figure 13.18

Image Description for Figure 14.1

Two triangles next to each other. The first triangle represents the western perspective. From bottom to top, the levels are:

- Physiological
- Safety
- Belongingness/Love
- Esteem
- Know/Understand
- Aesthetic
- Self-actualization
- Transcendence

The second triangle represents the First Nations' perspective. From bottom to top, the levels are:

- Self actualization
- Community actualization
- Cultural perpetuity

Return to Figure 14.1

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Transcripts

4

Transcript for Figure 1.18, Cultural Humility Edited YouTube Video

[Speaker 1]: One word to describe cultural humility for me is Love.

[Speaker 2]: Actually if I had to encapsulate cultural humility – the whole concept of cultural humility – it doesn't do it justice, but the word that I think of it is Essence.

[Speaker 3]: Escuchar.

[Speaker 4]: Opening.

[Speaker 5]: Receive.

[Speaker 6]: Compassion.

[Speaker 7]: Love.

[Melanie Tervalon, physician, consultant and co-author of "Cultural Humility vs. Cultural Competence"]: The principles of cultural humility offer one more framework to contribute to what has got to be our ultimate goal – yes, our ultimate goal – is that there will be a sense of equity, a sense of equality, and a kind of respect that we are driving forward.

[Title screen with music. Cultural Humility: People, Principles & Practices | A Film by Vivian Chávez | Dedicated to the shared legacy of people who make a way out of no way from generation to generation.]

[Jan Murray-García, Nursing Professor at UC Davis and co-author of "Cultural Humility vs. Cultural Competence"]: Cultural humility is a multi-dimensional concept and certainly Melanie Tervalon and I conceptualized three dimensions.

[Tervalon]: The first is lifelong learning and critical self-reflection and in that critical self-reflection it is the understanding of how each of us – every single one of us – is a complicated multi-dimensional human being. Each of us comes with our own histories and stories, our heritage, our point of view. You're looking at me now; I am very fair skinned. When I was a little girl, my hair was blonde, my eyes are blue. People often tried to call me anything but African American. I have a history. My identity is rooted in that history. My parents gave me the knowledge of my own social identity and my own experience in life has created that I get to say who I am.

[Murray-García]: The second tenet, after self-reflection and ongoing, lifelong learning and development, is this notion that we must mitigate the power imbalances to recognize and mitigate the power imbalances that are inherent often in our clinician patient or clinician client or service provider community dynamics.

[Tervalon]: And then finally the piece that I would offer that Jan and I feel people often either don't read or don't like, which is [that] the institution has to model these principles as well.

[Music]

[La'Shay Morris, Health Education student, San Francisco State University, reading an excerpt from "Cultural Humility vs. Cultural Competence"]: An African-American nurse is caring for a middle-aged Latino woman several hours after the patient had undergone surgery. A Latino physician on a consult service approached the bedside and, noting the moaning patient, commented to the nurse that the patient appeared to be in a great deal of post-operative pain.

[Morris]: The nurse summarily dismissed his perception, informing him that she took a course in nursing school in cross-cultural medicine and knew that Hispanic patients overexpress the pain that they're feeling. The Latino physician had a difficult time influencing the perspective of this nurse, who focused on her self-proclaimed cultural expertise.

[Murray-García]: It was curious to this Latino physician who first of all was Latino – not like all, in his case, not like all Mexican

Americans know everything there is to know about Mexican-American patients; that wasn't it – but he might have been a resource for that African-American nurse in that moment that she didn't feel like she needed, again because she had bought into this notion of competence, of cultural competence.

[Tervalon]: The distinction between cultural humility and cultural competence was that we were in a process and a relationship that had many other layers to it, and that we were less comfortable with even the term of competence. And a way that I think people understand well and that it implies especially for people who are providers and are trained in academia that you were then all knowing and all powerful and we felt like that was not what was happening for us as we were learning from community and understanding in a very practical way how families were coming to the hospital and feeling as if they really were not being heard from their own heritage and history. And how that impacted what they came to the hospital with that we didn't know anything about, hadn't even a clue about. For us, this is part of the humility piece of it. Getting to understand that – not trying to humiliate you, not trying to make you feel bad – trying to help us all understand that life is like this and to in a certain sense be really happy about not knowing.

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Transcript for Figure 1.29, Social Construction YouTube Video

Hi. I'm Kim Puttman. I'm a sociologist and author at Oregon Coast Community College.

Hi. I'm Liz Pearce. I teach in human development and family sciences at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon.

These videos are being made for Open Oregon Educational Resources.

Rain is a fact of life. The storms roaring in from the ocean soak the forests and the yards. The brisk wind scours our beaches and our hearts. The gentle rain on the vineyards grows our grapes and brings us peace. This rain is real, but our experience of rain is socially constructed. That's what we're here to talk about today.

Social construction is a term introduced by Austrian-born American sociologist and Protestant theologian Peter Berger and American-Austrian sociologist Thomas Luckmann in 1966. These men wrote a book called "The Social Construction of Reality." In it, they assert that our social world is constructed in the daily habits and patterns that people repeat regularly. Social constructions are shared understandings that are jointly accepted by large numbers of people in society or social groups. How we make sense of our world depends on shared social agreements. These agreements can change over time, and even when the agreements are made up, they are real in their consequences.

Let's look at our example of rain to make sense of this. Clearly, if you go outside when it's raining, you will get wet. Rain is physically real. However, even our language around rain is socially constructed. The word "rain" and the raindrops themselves don't look at all alike. Also, our behavior in the rain is socially constructed. People in Chicago and people in Oregon deal with rain differently. In a very informal poll, the writers from "The Oregonian" asked people how often they use an umbrella. 66% of them said never. When they were asked why, most of the people said it was because they wanted their hands free. 8% of the people said they wouldn't use them because they would be embarrassed. What? People get wet because they are embarrassed? Here we see social construction in action. Real Oregonians don't use umbrellas, so if you want to be a real Oregonian, you follow the habit. The conversation in Chicago is really different. It's not whether you use an umbrella, it's how you find one that will actually work.

What else is socially constructed? Symbols are socially constructed. Symbols are gestures or objects that have meanings associated with them that are recognized by people who share a culture. One common symbol is a flag. In the US, when we use the symbol of the flag, we understand the cloth and colors to represent the United States. When we see pictures of people using the symbol of the flag to protest, it brings up emotions. We associate the cloth and colors with our country deeply, yet there are different socially constructed meanings related to the flag. Some believe that the flag is so important that it should only be displayed and treated in very respectful ways. Others believe that the flag is so important that burning it is the ultimate form of protest. Although we share the social construction of the symbol, not all of us share the same interpretation.

Another common symbol is money. We agree that this piece of paper can be exchanged for things that are worth a dollar, and as a society, we share this agreement. If you tried to convince a car salesperson that you could actually buy a car with this dollar, you wouldn't get very far. Even something as common as color can be socially constructed. Think for a moment about what colors you associate with girls and women, and what colors you associate with boys and men. Many people in the US are likely to say blue for boys and pink for girls. Did you know that this designation is socially constructed? For example, a June 1918 article from the trade publication "Earnshaw's Infants Department" said, "The generally accepted rule is pink for the boys and blue for the girls. The reason is that pink, being a more decided and stronger color, is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl."

Right now, in our society, it seems like if you think of a color for a boy — in a binary system, if you think of a color for boys, it would be blue, and a color for girls would be pink. And as you can see, we are not fitting into that social construction. And lots of people don't, but, still, it's the way that social construction exists right now.

And more recently, pink is being reclaimed as a color for men. The men's magazine "GQ" declared in 2013 that "real men wear pink."

Our behavior is also socially constructed. We see this when we look at who uses masks or face coverings. Before the Covid 19 pandemic, it was rare to see people in the United States using masks. However, this behavior has been present in Asia since 2002 with the advent of the SARS epidemic. Mask wearing during the pandemic was also more common in countries with a high degree of social trust. It will be interesting to see how this behavioral norm changes as the pandemic comes to an end. Another behavior that may seem universal but that is actually socially constructed is kissing. When you think of who kisses whom, the first image is the Hollywood movie version of the sexy embrace between a woman and man. However this version is not the only way that kissing is socially constructed. We might also expect that parents and children kiss within the context of the family. In some cultures, even strangers kiss. In Latin America and France, the air kiss to the cheek is common, even when you don't know the person that well. In New Zealand, the Maoris share the hongi, a greeting in which they touch foreheads and breath together. This greeting acknowledges their interdependent connection with each other. The most famous interracial kiss on TV happened on Star Trek in 1968, only a year after the Supreme Court ruled that interracial marriage must be legalized in every state in the United States. In the times of Covid 19, we found that the kiss was quickly replaced by the ever-common elbow bump, and our understanding about who can kiss each other continues to evolve.

Even social categories that we might think of biological are socially constructed. When you consider gender, you may think that gender itself is fixed, that it's the same as sex assigned at birth, that society consists of women and men with specific physical characteristics and associated gender roles. However, social scientists assert that gender is socially constructed also. People identify as nonbinary, neither male nor female, and transgender, expressing a gender other than sex assigned at birth, as well as male or female. In addition, how we do gender changes over time. Consider for a moment how what we wear signals our gender. Who traditionally wears pants? Who traditionally wears dresses or skirts? These norms are challenged in different cultures and in different times. In Scotland, the kilt is part of the national dress for men. Hillary Clinton was considered unfeminine when she wore pantsuits. And Billy Porter wears elegant gowns all over town.

Finally, even though language, symbols, and behaviors are socially constructed, they are real in their consequences. This will be discussed in other videos, but here are two examples. Your gender significantly predicts your access to wealth. Women and nonbinary people are more likely to be poor, and there is a consistent gender pay gap all around the world.

In the United States, the first time that married women could own their own property occurred in 1848 in New York State. Perhaps more surprisingly, until the mid-1970s, women could not get credit without having a male cosigner, usually their husband or their father. And women are still often charged with higher interest rates than men.

Women and nonbinary people are more likely to be poor, and there is a consistent gender pay gap all around the world. In the United States, the first time that married women could own their own property occurred in 1848 in New York State. Perhaps more surprisingly, until the mid-1970s, women could not get credit without having a male cosigner, usually their husband or their father. And women are still often charged with higher interest rates than men.

In a second example, some people believe that race is based on biological categories. However, scientists know that how we define race changes over time and place. In 1790, the US census used free white males, free white females, all other free persons, and slaves as racial categories. In 1970, the US census added a separate question related to being of Hispanic ethnicity. In 2020, the US census changed to allow people to select more than one race to describe their racial identification.

The social construction of race also continues to be hotly contested. For example, Barack Obama is known as our first Black president. His father, Barack Obama, Sr., was a successful Black Kenyan economist, and his mother, Ann Dunham, was an

accomplished White American anthropologist. While he was running for president, some people said he wasn't Black enough, while others said he wasn't White enough. And beyond this exceptional example, scholars and people of color know that race matters.

Now we see that social constructions are shared understandings between groups of people. Social constructions can change over time or location, and they are real in their consequences. Because we create social constructions in our everyday interactions, we have hope for change. The next time you enjoy a walk in the rain, with or without your umbrella, think about it. [Music]

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Transcript for Figure 2.1, A Minute and Over: Critical Race Theory

[Music]

[Megan Paulson, Instructor, History and Social Science at Phillips Academy Andover]: The foundations of critical race theory comes out of the critical Legal Studies movement. That movement looked at the ways in which the law is not neutral. Critical Race Theory evolved from that in that we look at how race and concepts of race are central to the American experience. Through Critical Race Theory we're seeing how the concept of whiteness and the concept of others are very much embedded in our founding documents, in our legal system, how we think and interact with each other.

One of the most important parts of it is how the kids make connections with each other in the class. They have to learn to trust each other and they're sharing some really personal fundamental issues of identity which helped them get in touch with their empathy for others. They suddenly have language and terminology and theories to make sense of some of their experiences that they have in the outside world and it's not simply a class for students of color. This is also for white students as well. One of the things that they learn in Critical Race Theory is that white is a race and it's a race by design. What comes with whiteness needs to be examined and this class kind of points to whiteness and allows them to explore that and talk about it and ask questions where they might not have had the opportunity to do that. And if you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going, and so this class kind of has kids looking back not only at their own experiences but those of their families and that helps to kind of propel them forward.

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Transcript for Figure 2.16, Theories and Concepts

[Liz Pearce]: Hi there, I want to spend a few minutes helping you understand a few of the theories and concepts that you'll be reading about in chapters one and two.

[Theories]

So, the theories I'm going to talk about are exchange, symbolic interaction, feminist, postmodern, all found in chapter one, and one that's kind of an up and coming perspective called the life course theory, and you'll find that at the end of chapter two.

[Exchange Theory]

So first, the exchange theory, which is sort of like what it sounds like. It's the idea that many of us form relationships or look for family members with whom we can exchange costs and benefits. This theory basically assumes that we are rational beings and that we like to weigh the benefits and the costs and make some kind of even exchange in our relationships. It also assumes that relationships stay somewhat static.

One of the main examples of the exchange theory is the old breadwinner-homemaker model that used to be more common in the United States. The idea being basically that the man was the breadwinner and the woman was the homemaker, and that they exchanged those various services to each other and that both benefited.

Now, if you want to look more into the study I'm about to talk about, there's a place you can click here and go to the actual study. What this study shows is kind of the difference between what people say they want and what people actually do. And I thought I'd use this example since we're talking about breadwinner-homemaker dynamics. Basically, what this shows is that while many young adults favor dual-income marriages and seem to be more predisposed towards a more even exchange of income and homemaking duties, in reality, younger people are the ones who still choose the breadwinner-homemaker wife marriages more so than people who are older.

So, in this class quite a bit, we'll talk about what people say they prefer and how that compares to what the actual data is. And that's important because those things sometimes are different. It doesn't mean someone's good or bad because they say they want one thing and they do another, but it does illustrate that there are differences between what we say we prefer and what we actually do.

So, I'm just going to click here and take you to the Pew Research site. You can see there's a little bit of an article and there are actually some more graphs to illustrate more. I really like this site. This is one you could use quite a bit for your weekly wonders and in your projects, your midterm, and your final project. So, I just wanted to show you this website too. It's called Pew Research.

[Symbolic Interaction Theory]

Next theory, symbolic interaction theory. This theory, again, as it says, it's kind of based on symbols and says that we make interpretations based on the symbols that we see and that from there follows our behavior. And of course, our biggest symbol system is words. And so, I've included this wordle for you. And part of the symbolic interaction theory says that basically, our words and our language are not keeping pace with how quickly families are changing. And if you just think about all the step relationships you might have, the half relationships, the exes, and the ex-exes, we don't really have words to describe all those different relationships very clearly. In addition, it says that we make interpretations based on words or actions that then lead us to a certain behavior.

So, I just want to expand a little bit on the opening the door example Chirlin gives in the text. Of course, he gives the example that when men open the door for a woman, it kind of reinforces that gender belief or role of men being stronger than women. But the other side of that is, how does the woman interpret the door being open? Does she see that as a kindness, or does she see that as somehow insulting? Maybe one day she might take it as a kindness, maybe another day she might interpret it another way.

And so, part of the symbolic interaction theory, unlike the exchange theory where it assumes more things staying the same, is that the symbolic interaction theory says, you know, things change, the world is fragile, things change based on time and the individual and the group.

[Feminist Theory]

The feminist theory, this is probably the best well-known, kind of, out there in the common world as opposed to the academic world. I do want to make a couple of points about it. First of all, when we talk about feminism, we're talking about a gender-based theory, not a sex-based theory. And we'll get into gender and sex actually next week and the differences. But basically, the feminist theory has to do with male dominance, but specifically around the gender roles that are predominant in the society. And it doesn't just pay attention to men being dominant but more how the entire culture reinforces that dominance. This is also a theory where there's some activism associated with it, and that's why it's probably a little bit better known.

And I liked this image because it shows a little bit about the feminist theory over time and across culture. We often think of the feminist movement as having happened in the 60s and 70s, but really it's been going on for hundreds of years.

[Postmodernism]

The post-modern perspective, and probably here's our picture of Modern Family, a television show many of you know that kind of

exemplifies part of the post-modern perspective, which says we have a lot of choices. The post-modern perspective is all about having choices not just about family but about career and about gender roles that, in the past, family life and work life was more prescriptive, and now, while we have a lot more choices, sometimes that can be overwhelming to the many different paths we can choose from. Postmodernism is also about individualism and our self-identity. I think of that old jingle, "Be all that you can be," and it kind of reinforces, Chirlin talks about individualism earlier in the chapter, that sense of sort of meeting your full potential as an individual. Postmodernism also talks about reflexivity, meaning that personally, people are reflective, think about what they're doing, consider, may change their path. Reflexivity is also bi-directional, meaning that while society changes us or changes the individual, the individual also changes society, so it's an ongoing cycle.

This is another theory that sees more of the change in the world as opposed to things staying static. Again, gender roles: "we've got this," "he can do it," which I'm guessing many of you recognize as sort of a take off on the Rosie the Riveter poster. Family structure can change, it is quite different and then our work lives. I've got a picture here of Chris Soules who's known for his appearances on The Bachelorette and The Bachelor. He's kind of the reverse example of postmodernism in that he comes from a long line of farmers and he's stayed in the farming business that's not as common as it used to be used to be much more common for

people to always stay in the career or the business that their parents had founded and that's that's less common now.

Also in post-modernism we talk about the created kinship concept, being able to form kinship ties with people that we choose as opposed to the more traditional biological and legal examples of of kin.

[Early Adulthood]

Okay, so here's one of the new theories. This one's called early adulthood and life course. And probably one of the really interesting concepts from this theory is the emerging early adulthood time period. I think this is especially interesting to talk about in a college setting, and what it says is that basically, we take longer to go from that graduation of high school period to the full adulthood, whereas in the past, that might have happened in a period of two, three, four, maybe five years. Now, people are taking more like 10 years, and that means getting the degree, getting started in a career, finding a life partner, buying a home, maybe having children is what is talked about as sort of arriving at the early adulthood.

I mentioned that I'll show you a picture here of a book and a fellow named Richard Setterston. He's actually at OSU, and he is one of the founders of this theory, very well known. If you find this theory interesting, you could take a class from him about the theory, which is what I did in my graduate program.

The theory also concentrates on birth cohorts and specifically what are the effects on people during this certain time of their life, the adolescence and early adulthood, and grouping people by birth cohorts. So, we're not talking about individual events like a parent dying or parents being divorced, or those kinds of things. We're talking about big sociological societal events that affect the entire birth cohort. And that's part of what this life course perspective says, is that those big, huge events really affect people.

So, I'm just going to give you an example from my early adulthood. I was an adolescent and a young adult in the '70s. So, one of the big historical events that affected me was the Vietnam War. And not just the Vietnam War, but that it was the first war to be televised. And that we saw pictures and images and videos like this on television. And perhaps even more so, that there was a lot of controversy and protests about the war, and a lot of political discussion and debate.

And so, for someone like me who grew up in the '70s, I grew up in a world where I saw the adults, who were very responsible adults, really being questioned by younger adults. And that had an effect on me and on my birth cohort. And that's what the life course perspective would say, is that those effects are very important to human development.

[Theories and Concepts: Studying Theories in HDFS 201]

So basically what I want to say about these theories is or I want to ask you, do you think these theories work together? Can you believe in more than one of these theories, or do you see them as conflicting with each other? And that's part of what you'll explore in your weekly wonder too when you delve into one theory and see if maybe it does work well with another theory or if another theory kind of points out some of the weaknesses in the theory that you're studying.

I think theories are really interesting because they really give us the why in HDFS 201. We're not just going to learn a bunch of facts about what people did; we're going to think about why did these things happen, how did the forces come together that cause changes in families. So the theories really help us understand that.

Okay, three more concepts: globalization, sociological imagination, and the sociological viewpoint.

[Globalization]

Globalization first. I think Chirlin explains this really well. I'm just drawing it to your attention because it's such an important concept and it's one we'll come back to over and over and over again in this course. How much the world has changed and how connected we are to people from other countries and how much that affects our family and work lives.

[Sociological Imagination]

Sociological imagination is not something Chirlin mentions, so C. Wright Mills, who's a sociologist, defined this as the vivid awareness of the relationship between experience and the wider society. And I want to pull this term in because I think this is important to your having a good experience in this class. Basically, as you are studying in this class, I want you to be able to look at experiences and try to see them from a variety of perspectives. Most of the things we'll talk about in this class have no simple one right or wrong explanation. They're usually very complicated. And really, part of what makes it intriguing is relating your own experience to wider society. I want you to think about your family life, the life you've had and the life you want to have, and also to consider the observations you've made about other people and other family members and how that all fits with the greater society. So we'll be using this term a lot, and that's what I'm thinking about when I use it.

[Sociological Viewpoint]

And finally, the sociological viewpoint. Now here's a picture of our author of our book, Andrew Chirlin. Again, I think he explains this very well in the book and in fact, he explains it by using himself as an example.

Sociologists basically understand that there's no way that we can be totally objective when studying the family. Each one of us is going to be subjective because part of being human is having our own unique experiences, influences, and those will affect how we look at families and at society. So what we need to do upfront is acknowledge our own experience and our own bias, still strive to be as objective as possible, absolutely, but recognize the reality, and I think Chirlin does a really nice job of sharing his personal viewpoint on a few things and letting you know that he's aware that he sees the world this way. This is also part of critical thinking. Part of critical thinking is knowing that you have a bias and how that might affect your study.

In closing, I'll say that the points I've featured here are not the entire reading or the entire course content for this week, but these are things that I thought either needed a little more explanation or were extremely important and critical to your success in this course or that just were, I think, are a little more complicated and from having taught this course for many years are things that students have struggled with in the past. So I hope this helps you getting ready for your quizzes, your discussions, and your weekly wonders.

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Transcript for Figure 2.19, Social Construction of Difference

[Kim Puttman]: Hi, I'm Kim Puttman. I'm a sociologist and author at Oregon Coast Community College.

[Liz Pearce]: Hi, I'm Liz Pearce. I teach in human development and family sciences at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon. These videos are being made for Open Oregon Educational Resources.

In this video, we will build on your understanding of social constructions and connect that understanding to what it means to say that difference is socially constructed. To review, social constructions are shared understandings that are jointly accepted by large numbers of people in a society or a social group. These understandings form a basis of shared assumptions about reality. Remember the examples about the value of money, the power of the flag, and the connection between gender and color. So when we talk about the social construction of difference, the difference part becomes notable when we name it, and we assign a value to it. What do I mean by we? "We" doesn't have to include 100% of the people in a society. Social constructions can be powerful even if everyone in a given society or social group doesn't believe them. Even when a social construction is not universally accepted, it still has power, it still has real consequences.

Here is a social identity wheel that focuses specifically on social characteristics, those that are usually defined by physical, social, or mental characteristics such as gender, sex, socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. When you combine these identities, it is called your social location, your unique location related to power and privilege. In an expanded view of the social identity wheel, we see that it not only contains the social characteristics, but also what we call roles and relationships in the outer ring of the wheel. And on the innermost wheel, our internal characteristics or what we might think of as our personality. This part of the wheel contains values, beliefs, and motivations.

Black author James Baldwin said, no one was White before he/she came to America. It took generations and a vast amount of coercion before this became a White country. White sociologist Allan Johnson quoted Baldwin's work when explaining that we filter reality or what we think is real through a cultural lens. In the United States, we have a lens that defines the concept of race as both important and hierarchical. As an individual you may or may not be conscious of this. If you are White part of your privilege is that you don't have to notice race. If you aren't White, you can't ignore it. Unless a culture defines a difference as significant, it is socially irrelevant. That's the important part. When we assign hierarchies, we socially construct differences. For example, in talking about skin color, our society has assigned value to skin color over hundreds of years, privileging people with white skin and oppressing people with brown or black skin. This difference in assigned value has been codified into laws like slave codes or Jim Crow laws enforcing racial hierarchies with laws and violence. Difference has been embedded into policies such as redlining, the practice of not loaning money to buy houses in specific areas. Difference is also practiced when law enforcement uses racial profiling. People of color may refer to this as driving or more broadly living while Black. These ideas are embedded in our society and internalized in each of us. What makes this powerful is that we often don't even recognize that these ideas exist. We may see these differences as reality rather than something that has been invented and reinforced over time. And it doesn't take everyone sharing the same hierarchical thinking to have a very real effect on others. For example, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is expressed through laws, policies, and informal practices even though not everyone agrees that heterosexuality should be privileged.

Because the other part of social construction is that, that social constructions are also real in their consequences. Where do you see that realness playing out?

I'm just thinking about an example, like, you know, a friend of mine recently, she and her wife were celebrating their 25th anniversary, and she had an appointment, a long-standing appointment to get her makeup done for the party, and she was going to have rainbows, you know, done over her eyes and to match her rainbow-colored shoes. And the day of the appointment, when she explained exactly the makeup that she wanted and, you know, and mentioned her wife, the makeup artist told her she wouldn't do it, couldn't do it, wouldn't do it. And so harm is not just about the laws that are out there, it's really about how people treat one another and how they think about one another. So even though we can say it's not real, like it's not really true that, you know, someone who's gay is less than or should have less rights than someone who's heterosexual the consequences are real.

Some socially constructed differences may seem more subtle, such as the privileges experienced by tall people who are more likely to be men. Transportation designs, such as the height of seats on a bus, the grab straps for those standing on a train and airbags in newer cars are examples of designs modeled on the average man's size and frame. These can put short people more likely to be women or children at risk. There is a continuum of power and privilege in the United States and many other places.

Socially constructed differences affect real life behaviors and outcomes. For example, if we take marital status in general, we would say that in our society, we value the institution of marriage and perceive people more positively who have stayed married than people who have divorced. That's an example of assigning a value to a difference, which socially constructs a hierarchy in those behaviors. But we live in a society which creates laws that allow people to get married or prevents them from getting married. Laws are part of privilege. Take a look at the power and privilege wheel. You can see that both people who are heterosexual and people who are White have more power. For example, until 1967, it was illegal in some states for a couple from different races to get married. And until 2015, federal law prevented same-sex couples from getting married. Without a change in these laws these couples not only couldn't get married, but they also faced restrictions on getting healthcare, adopting children together and receiving spousal benefits such as social security and other inheritances.

In addition to social structures, we often assign value to people of different groups unconsciously. Sociologist Allan Johnson talks about implicit bias as being the quick and unconscious judgments that people make about each other. These unconscious biases are based on assumptions or stereotypes that we may not consciously realize that we hold. For example, we are likely to assume people are straight if to us they appear to have typical characteristics unless we are provided with other information or knowledge. Let's look at some other examples. When someone has light white skin, then they are considered White. For example, do you think Texas Senator Ted Cruz is White? He actually identifies as Hispanic. Someone who wears dresses and makeup, we may think of as feminine. Consider Demi Lovato. Would you think she identifies as a woman? She actually identifies as non-binary? Do you know someone who has a disability, but one that doesn't always show on the outside, such as chronic fatigue syndrome or lupus? Invisible disabilities don't show on the outside, but they are real nonetheless.

We don't tend to question our assumptions about race, gender, sexual orientation, or ability unless we run into someone who doesn't fit neatly into a category or are given explicit information that conflicts with what we have socially constructed in our heads. Socially constructed differences privilege some of us and oppress others. Any individual may experience both privilege and oppression based on their unique combination of social identities and the socially constructed differences that exist. Even though socially constructed differences are not a reality, they have real-life effects.

[Music.]

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Transcript for Figure 3.12, Relationships Are Hard, But Why?

[Stan Tatkin at TEDxKC]: Relationships are difficult. Everybody knows that. Most people think it's because of money, sex, kids, work, or who picks up the socks. Some people think it's because we're just not right for each other, or we don't have enough in common. Look, it's not just you, or him, or her. There's actually nothing more difficult on the planet than another person. Think about that. We're all difficult; we all come to each new relationship wanting easy, but we also come with our fair share of unresolved painful experiences from previous relationships.

Between love and work, love is by far, more complex and challenging. Much of the reason for this is based in our automatic neurobiological reflexes, so let me explain. Let's start with that fancy neocortex of yours, the high cortical areas. For simplicity sake, let's call them your ambassadors. Your ambassadors are very smart, deliberate, but slow; and they're very expensive to run. They're really good at planning, predicting, organizing, languaging and if I may be frank, they're really good at making shit up. (Laughter)

When you think of logic and reason, think ambassadors. The subcortical areas of your brain, let's call them your primitives; they're very fast, memory-based, automatic, and very cheap to run. They're involved in love and sex, but also threat detection by scanning for dangerous faces, voices, gestures, movements, as well as dangerous words and phrases. When you think fight or flight, think primitives. Thanks to your primitives, your day is 99% fully automatic. Your ambassadors love novelty, but they have to offload newness to your primitives in order to conserve resources. You can't possibly run your day with your ambassadors in full gear; you would fry your brain. So the primitives use something called procedural memory, otherwise known as body memory, and it works like this: you learn to ride a bike; and in the beginning, your primitives and ambassadors are in full gear to learn this new skill, but very soon, your primitives are going to automate bike riding without much need for your ambassadors. It goes into procedural memory. Pretty neat, huh? Now you fall in love with someone, and again, your brain is lit up; you want to know everything about them. You want to touch them, taste them, smell them, you can't get enough of them. You are high on drugs. (Laughter)

Nature's drugs, not those! Dopamine for wanting more, noradrenaline for focus and attention, testosterone for you know what, and a distinct drop in serotonin so you can perseverate and obsess. You're neurochemically addicted. You spend all your time together for weeks and months; you get serious, and this is when the fun begins, because very soon, your brain is going to automate this new person and theirs is going to automate you. This is supposed to happen, it's what the brain does in order to function. It'll make your relationship feel a lot easier and it will lead you to your first really big mistakes because you think you know each other already so you stop paying attention, you stop being fully present. Your primitives are relying on procedural memory to run your relationship, and that memory includes everyone and everything of an emotional importance in your life. That primitive brain of yours is going to read your partner's thoughts, feelings, and intentions through that memory lens.

So it's kind of like this, "Why are you giving me that look?" "I didn't give you any look." "Why are you using that tone of voice with me?" "What tone?" – "Stop it!" – "What?" – "That." – "What?!" That's the sound of two nervous systems misfiring, and that is our nature. (Laughter)

That will happen, and it will be a problem if you don't understand your automatic brain. As a couple's therapist, I can tell you that fighting in and of itself is inevitable. There is no relationship without conflict. In fact, if you are a conflict avoider, you will appear threatening to your partner. The real problem isn't that you fight. It's when you do, one or both of you threatens to leave the

relationship. A relationship can survive fights, but what it cannot survive is loss of safety and security. Communication, memory, perception – all error-prone. Human communication, even on a good day, is terrible. We're mostly misunderstanding each other much of the time; when we feel good, we don't care that much, when we don't feel good, we care a whole lot. (Laughter)

When stress goes up, human communication gets a whole lot worse. Memory is unreliable. Memory is faulty, folks, and in a fight for whose memory is right, you're probably both wrong. Your perceptions are like fun house mirrors. Your perceptions are constantly being altered by your state of mind and your memory. They're constantly playing tricks on you. If we assume our communication, our memory, our perception is the real truth, that's hubris, and that will get us into trouble.

Before I go on, I want to be clear about threat: if you're in an abusive relationship, you must get out. I'm not talking about big T threat; only small T threat, the kind that we have to deal with day in and day out as we bump up against each other, and we fight. But why do our fights spin out of control? It's because real time is too fast, and when we feel threatened, we act, and react with our primitives. Our ambassadors actually have no idea how we got into this place. It's what makes shit up! (Laughter) "I'm right, dammit, and here's what sounds really good to prove my point." (Laughter) You really have no idea what you're talking about (Laughter) but you sound so confident. (Laughter)

I want to get to the fun part here. Since all of you literally carry around your own neurobiology lab with you, wherever you go; here's a few experiments you can run in the comfort of your own home: the next time a relationship moment turns tense, change your position; go eye-to-eye and face-to-face, notice what happens. And by the way, if you tend to fight a lot while driving in the car, it's because you're side-to-side and glance; a glance is a threat trigger, that's why you should never fight in the car, or on the phone, or while emailing, or while texting. We're visual animals, and we need our eyes in order to regulate each other's nervous systems.

I want you to understand that what I'm talking about here happens to everyone, regardless of personality, previous experience, and relationship experience, or trauma. No angels, no devils here; we're all capable of becoming threatening, even to those we love, and we're capable of making huge mistakes and errors in communication, memory, and perception; all of us. The decision to be in a relationship, the decision to be in a committed relationship – loving, secure functioning – means being in the foxhole together and protecting each other from the dangers out there. It's not just about getting our own way. We're supposed to have each other's backs.

I've seen far too many relationships end before their time, because people cannot get this simple concept; our major job is to protect each other and make each other feel safe and secure. The world is a dangerous place, it's always been so; and right now, it feels a little scary. If we don't have each other's backs, who will? Thank you and good luck with your relationships. (Applause)

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Transcript for Figure 3.14, The Secret To A Successful Relationship

[Julian Huguet]: Relationships are terrifying. I mean, did you know half of all marriages last forever??

'Ello loves, Julian here for DNews. All right, first of all the oft-quoted statistic that 50% of marriages fail is just plain wrong. The actual number for first marriages is closer to 20-25%, but that still begs the question; why do they fail? Why do people who have avowed themselves to one another for their whole lives not go the distance?

John and Julie Gottman have been pondering that question for decades. By the way, they're both psychologists, and yes, they're married. Feel free to "d'awwww" now. According to the Gottmans, you can actually predict with 94% certainty which relationships will be healthy and which will be festering quagmires of misery and stress simply by how they support each other.

Anyone who's been in a relationship knows that sometimes you and your partner's interests don't align. Maybe you like hockey but they're not so hot on it. Or maybe they like camping and you understandably think sleeping on the dirty ground in the woods with no wifi is a terrible way to spend a vacation. But when one person tries to share their interests with their significant other, that's a bid for emotional support. How often they get that acknowledgment makes all the difference.

John Gottman conducted a study where they invited 130 newlywed couples to what looked like a bed and breakfast, but was actually a lab where they could observe the subjects. He was watching for how often one person would say something seemingly inconsequential, like, “hey check out that bird,” or, “I have the weirdest feeling we’re being watched right now.” Gottman called these “bids” for emotional support, and noted how often their partner would respond in a meaningful way.

Their findings show that couples stay together when they show bids of interest or support 9 out of 10 times, while couples who only support each other a third of the time split within six years.

Ignoring those bids for support and acceptance can have an actual physiological effect. The Gottmans and a team of researchers brought in newlyweds to interview them. They were asked some pretty tough questions on their relationships while electrodes monitored their heart rates, blood flow, and sweatiness. While across the board, everyone responded calmly to the questions, some couples showed higher heart rates, blood flow, and sweat production. In other words, their palms were sweaty, knees weak, arms were heavy. They’re nervous, but on the surface they look calm and ready. The stress of being in the same room as their spouse and talking about their relationship caused their sympathetic nervous system to kick in and they had a fight-or-flight response. Those couples were usually divorced within 6 years.

So if you want to have a healthy and less stressful relationship, it’s important you both work to actively support each other’s emotional bids, even if camping is just the worst.

If you want to learn another trick to keeping the fire lit, check out Anthony’s explanation of how texting can ruin a relationship. What do you think the key is to living happily ever after? Tell us your secret in the comments, and I’ll see you next time on DNews.

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Transcript for Figure 4.6, The Strange Situation – Mary Ainsworth

[Narrator]: But can the essential elements of home life be translated into a standard laboratory setting for controlled scientific study?

After conducting extensive observation of parents and children at home, a student of Bowlby’s, Mary Ainsworth, devised such a procedure, called “The Strange Situation,” which places the child under some stress. It has become the most widely-used, standardized way to assess the quality of a child’s attachment to their caregiver.

Here the researchers are recording how 14-month-old Lisa responds in this attractive but unfamiliar setting. How will she react to a stranger? What will happen when her mother leaves the room? And when she returns?

It’s Lisa’s behavior when her mother returns, what psychologists call “the reunion,” that they are particularly interested in.

[Psychologist]: Most importantly is to look for the type of balance that a child flags between an attachment need and on the other hand to explore the playing material.

[Narrator]: Once Lisa has settled down to play, a stranger enters the room, and sits in the chair reading a magazine. After a couple of minutes, the stranger attempts to interact with Lisa. Soon after, Lisbeth [Lisa’s mother] gets a cue to leave the room.

[Baby cries.]

The stranger tries to comfort Lisa, but in vain. Lisbeth comes back into the room, and the camera records how Lisa reacts. Now the first part of the procedure is over, and Lisbeth settles Lisa down again. The stranger leaves them alone together. And soon after, Lisbeth goes too. Lisa is on her own. Her distress is plain to see. Once again, the efforts of a stranger to console Lisa are to no avail.

[Baby cries.]

But Lisbeth manages to calm her almost at once, and shortly afterward, the observation ends. Lisa shows outward signs of what's called secure attachment.

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Transcript for Figure 4.8, Nature vs Nurture

Have you noticed that you're different to your relations, parents or carers, your next-door neighbor, the kid who lives across the street and everyone else on the planet? In fact you're unique.

But do you really know why you are different? Why are we all different to each other? Why does any organism have different characteristics to another organism?

The answer lies in a long running debate called 'nature versus nurture', or genetics versus environment, which is a little less catchy!

'Nature' refers to our genetics – the unique combination of genes that we have naturally inherited from our biological parents, from their DNA. Many characteristics are controlled by our genes, including our blood group, eye color or natural hair color. Some diseases are also caused by our genes, for example cystic fibrosis. The color of a flower or a fruit is controlled by genes in plants.

'Nurture' refers to the effect of the environment on characteristics, the word literally means care. Examples of characteristics that are determined by the environment are weight, or mass, which is dependent on your diet, or the presence of a scar. Some diseases may be caused by environmental influences, such as type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease.

Imagine that a plant has not received enough sunlight or water. This may influence the height of the plant or the number of fruits produced. We would say that the environment has influenced these characteristics too, or that a plant has been affected by nurture.

The effect of genetics and the environment on characteristics has been researched using identical twins. Can you think why this is? (Pause). Identical twins have identical DNA, so, in theory, should have identical characteristics. It follows that any differences between a pair of identical twins could be due to the influence of the environment on their characteristics. In fact, twins often grow up to have very different personalities and preferences beyond their physical similarities. These studies showed that many characteristics are influenced by both genetics and the environment. Some studies actually use twins identical genomes as a control to prove the effect of the environment on the body. For example, one study showed how skin aged differently by comparing smoker twins with non-smoker twins.

Remember that the characteristics of a living organism are influenced by its genetics and its interaction with the environment. So both nature and nurture are responsible.

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Transcript for Figure 4.14, Inside a Young Migrant's Family Separation Nightmare

[Video call in Spanish from father in Huehuetenango, Guatemala to son in Florida]

[Narrator]: For the past three years, David and his son, Adelso, have communicated only by phone. Adelso is just one of about 5,500 children who was taken from a parent, as a result of the Trump administration's family separation policy. They're among more than 1,000 families who have been waiting for the Biden administration to follow through on a promise to reunify them. Now there is a new sense of hope as the Biden government starts to reunite a handful of families. But David and Adelso's story — split between Guatemala and Florida — offers a firsthand look at the continuing psychological effects of separation … … and how the delay in reuniting families has in some cases encouraged people to make a desperate trek back to the U.S.

David and his son spoke with us on condition that we not use their full names and conceal their identities. Since he was jailed and deported, David has kept a low profile in the countryside, evading the gangs he says extorted the trucking business he worked for and threatened his family before they fled to the U.S. David was deported to Guatemala after serving 30 days in a U.S. prison for the crime of illegal reentry. Neither David, his wife or their other children have seen Adelso since.

[President Joe Biden]: "We can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world."

[Narrator]: Days after he took office, President Joe Biden signed an executive order to reunify families separated under the Trump administration.

[President Joe Biden]: "The re-establishment of the interagency task force and the reunification of families."

[Narrator]: This week, as migrant apprehensions approached the highest level in 20 years, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it would bring four mothers to the U.S. to reunite with their children. The U.S. will reunify another 35 or so families in the coming weeks as part of a pilot project, which David and Adelso might be a part of. But this is just a start, and the process for reunifying all families could take months, and even years.

In David's town of several thousand people, I found three other parents who were forcibly separated from their children under "zero tolerance." Melvin Jacinto and his 14-year-old son tried to enter the U.S. to look for work that would pay for, among other things, his daughter's hip surgery.

[Interview in Spanish with Melvin Jacinto when he talks about being separated from his son.]

[Narrator]: Melvin and his wife Marta's son, Rosendo, now lives with a relative in Minneapolis. They, too, rely on video calls to stay connected.

[Video call in Spanish between Marta Camposeco and her son.]

[Interview in Spanish with Melvin Jacinto continues.]

[Video call in Spanish between Marta Camposeco and her son continues.]

[Interview in Spanish with Melvin Jacinto continues.]

[Narrator]: The reality is that work is really scarce here. Melvin takes what jobs he can find, but the family relies on money sent from Rosendo, their teenage son, who's now working in the U.S. We visited the homes of two other fathers who were separated from their kids at the border and were told they'd already made the return trip to reunite with them.

[Interview in Spanish with Eusevia Quiñónez.]

[Narrator]: She allowed me to speak with her husband on her phone.

[Call in Spanish with Eusevia Quiñónez's husband.]

[Narrator]: He said he reunited with his son in Fort Lauderdale, and was staying in a house with other migrants. We heard of other parents as well, deported to Guatemala and Honduras, who'd already made the perilous journey to reunite with their children.

According to immigration lawyers, about 1,000 separated kids have yet to see their parents again. They've had to grow up fast, placed in the care of foster families or relatives. For the last three years, Adelso has been living with his aunt, Teresa Quiñónez, in Boca Raton, Fla. He's been attending school, and plays soccer in his spare time, but he still struggles with the trauma of what happened in Guatemala and at the border.

[Interview in Spanish with Adelso.]

Unlike some of the separated kids, Adelso does have support.

[Teresa Quiñónez in a business office, on the phone]: “Yes, definitely, I would go there in the morning, too Yeah —”

[Narrator]: His aunt Teresa came to the U.S. as an unaccompanied minor, and later became a legal resident. She stepped in to give Adelso the care she didn’t have when she came to the U.S. as a teenager.

[Teresa Quiñónez]: “I can say that I understand his pain, not being with mom and dad. Living with someone familiar, somehow — still, it’s not the same.”

[Narrator]: Once a month, Adelso talks with a child psychologist at Florida State University’s Center for Child Stress and Health. The service is paid through a government settlement for families separated under the “zero tolerance” policy. Adelso is one of several children affected by “zero tolerance” that Natalia Falcon now works with in South Florida.

[Phone call in Spanish with therapist.]

[Dr. Natalia Falcon, child psychologist]: “I’ve been working with Adelso and his family for a little bit over six months. We see a lot of sleeping issues. You know, they can’t sleep, they can’t fall asleep or the nightmares, right. We have to look at nightmares very delicately. Those recurring memories, flashbacks of that traumatic event as one of the main symptoms of P.T.S.D.”

[Narrator]: Studies show that childhood trauma, left unaddressed, can negatively affect health and relationships long into adulthood.

[Interview in Spanish with Adelso continues.]

[Teresa Quiñónez]: “I don’t want him to get depressed, taking him to that place, like, ‘Oh, I just want to be alone.’ That’s why I try to bring him out and do things with him.”

[Narrator]: After being separated from his dad, Adelso spent two months in a New York shelter with other separated kids before Teresa finally won his release.

[Teresa Quiñónez]: “I still remember seeing him coming out of the airport. His little face, like — it’s heartbreaking, and sometimes I see him now, he has grown so much in this, in this time that he came here, he has become so mature and that’s hard to see too because it’s like life pushing you to be that mature. You are not enjoying your being a child.”

[Narrator]: For now, Adelso and David continue to work with their lawyers and hope to be part of the first wave of reunions.

[Interview in Spanish with Adelso continues.]

As for David, he told us that he can only wait so long, and that he has also considered paying a smuggler to cross back into the U.S. and claim asylum again.

[Interview in Spanish with David.]

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Transcript for Figure 5.13, Who Belongs?: Family Stories of Immigration

In this video, we will examine the social problem of belonging through the stories of students whose families may resonate with yours. Before we begin, take a moment to reflect on your own family and how it has evolved over time. Your family might resemble some of the narratives we explore, or it could be distinctly different. Who belongs when it comes to your family?

While all families are unique, the traditional American family is often portrayed as the nuclear family—a household with two

parents and their children. The idealized image is of a middle-class, heterosexual, married couple, typically white, owning a house, and perhaps even having a dog and a white picket fence. Many laws, policies, and practices assume this family structure. However, societal changes have led to a decline in the prevalence of nuclear families.

As illustrated by the graph, the percentage of children living in families with two parents in their first marriage has decreased from over 70% in the 1960s to about 45% in 2014. Alternative family structures, such as single-parent households, remarried parents, or cohabitating parents, have become more common.

The issue of belonging doesn't arise from the changing forms of families; rather, it stems from the fact that not all families receive the support they need to thrive. Mixed-status families, comprising members with different citizenship or immigration statuses, face unique challenges. Some family members may be undocumented, living with the constant fear of deportation, while others may have DACA or asylum status.

LGBTQIA+ families also encounter hurdles, such as homophobia and prejudice. Approximately 3.7 million children in the United States have a parent who identifies as LGBTQIA+, and these families navigate judgment and rejection from both their families of origin and societal institutions.

The video presents personal stories to shed light on these issues. Kevin, for example, shares the challenges faced by his DACA recipient family member, highlighting the impact of xenophobia and racism. In another story, Omar, Kevin, and Julian discuss their journey as a same-sex couple, emphasizing the legal challenges and societal shifts that have redefined the concept of marriage.

Both individual and collective actions are showcased as families strive to thrive. The power of social movements is evident, particularly in the case of LGBTQIA+ and undocumented individuals who fight for their rights and social justice. Belonging, as explored in this video, is not just a personal matter; it is a social justice imperative.

By expanding our definition of family in laws, policies, practices, and everyday life, we contribute to creating a world where all families belong. The pursuit of belonging is synonymous with the pursuit of social justice.

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Transcript for Figure 6.5, Why Does the Government Care about Race?

Every 10 years in the US folks celebrate a time honored tradition that most of us wish we could forgot and many of us do: the collection of the national census.

Because let's face it: it only happens once every 10 years and filling out a questionnaire is hardly the highlight of the average person's decade when compared to other major life events like graduations, deaths, newborn kids, buying a home, or avoiding social media spoilers for our favorite shows.

But if the census is supposed to be a relatively impartial record that keeps track of how many people are located in the country at a given time then why does the census ask us about our race Well the answers tells us about a history of voter disenfranchisement that stretches back to our country's inception.

So stay tuned because this week Origin of Everything is getting very...civics-y.

Civic-ish?

Civics minded?

Let's settle for the last one.

One thing I've heard repeated over and over again about the census is "why does the government need to know our race?"

The argument usually goes, "We're all more than our race.

So, why is the federal government keeping track of this sensitive information?

And of course we all have many intersecting identities, among which race is one.

But while race became a major category that public and private institutions started tracking systematically throughout the 20th century, the federal census was preoccupied with race since the 18th century.

The first census conducted in 1790 included questions about, "gender, race, relationship to the head of household, name of the head of household, and the number of slaves, if any" according to the US Census Bureau, so the question of race has been baked into the cake since the census's beginning.

But although the original census document was pretty short and sweet, it was actually a reflection of the limited scope of citizenship at the country's beginning.

As more and more people were granted access to citizenship, residency, asylum, and government aid, the questions became more complex through time.

Now the census is as much about keeping track of folks as it is about preventing things like voter suppression and gerrymandering, and also allocating state and federal spending for infrastructure, housing, education, and healthcare.

It also allows us to measure life outcomes for different groups, track the efficacy of government programs, and determine how many representatives and electoral votes each state gets.

That's right.

Filling in a bunch of bubbles can determine how many federal resources your state (and, indirectly, you) get every year, as well as how much your state matters in the next federal election.

Which means in some ways info we bubble in on the census can have as lasting an impact as the votes we cast.

So to get to the bottom of this question today we should first talk about how the census emerged and what exactly those early enumerators (no really that's what census-takers are called) were even looking for.

Next we need to think about how it evolved from a 6 question survey to become a 50 plus question laundry list of information for the federal government before being whittled down to 10 questions again.

And the answer demonstrates how we went from recording 6 answers per household across 13 states, 3 districts and 1 territory to spreading to over 300 million people today.

And finally we'll discuss why race (among other new questions) seems to be here to stay on this nationwide poll.

The early history of the census runs pretty much parallel to the history of the first US Presidency.

George Washington had been in office for 1 year when the first census was conducted in 1790.

And nearly every one of the original 6 questions was about race in one way or another, because the number of eligible voters was entirely determined by race and gender.

Census workers were asked to collect these answers from every household: Names of heads of families The number of free White males aged: under 16 years and of 16 years and upward Number of free White females Number of other free persons Number of slaves The 3 of the questions explicitly ask for the number of white residents in a household while the last two ask to record "other free persons" (other being the coded word here for "not white") and number of slaves (with an understanding that the overwhelming majority of enslaved persons at this time were of African descent).

So the original census design was largely concerned with race.

But why?

Well keep in mind that only free, white men who owned property and were 21 or older could vote.

So the earliest purpose of recording race on the census wasn't to evenly distribute voter rights, but to limit enfranchisement to all but one specific group.

And in order to guarantee that limitation, the federal government had to ask about race (since it was a prerequisite of voting).

But because voting rights were guaranteed to a relatively slim number of people, the early census didn't require much more information outside of race, gender, age, legal status (in regards to slavery and freedom) and whether or not you were a property owner.

The founding fathers shared a belief that men who didn't own land, poor people, white women, and all racial minorities were incapable of casting a decent vote or deciding the future of the country.

So the original reasons for recording race on the census were aimed at disenfranchisement, and limiting the rights of full citizenship to a small percentage of the overall population.

If that's the case, then why did race as a category on the census stick around?

Well the answer comes down, again, to how we were voting or really who was being excluded from the voter rolls.

After 1790 and throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, key pieces of legislation and historical shifts increased both the size of the country and the number of citizens eligible to vote.

That included people of color, emancipated slaves, all women, and men who didn't own land.

But the road to a fairer census was still very fraught.

According to journalist Becky Little, by 1820 "all other free persons" was converted to "free colored males and females." And in 1850, the census expanded to include the category of "mulatto" under the ranks of races that people could check off.

But that was because legislators saw the country pivoting toward the civil war, so they were thinking about which states would remain in the union, and about how to count millions of African Americans and people of color who were either enslaved or considered legally free but still largely barred from casting a ballot.

And Professor Melissa Nobles, a political scientist at MIT, noted that the 1850 designation of "mulatto" was added at the request of racial scientist Josiah Nott, who hoped to use this information to prove his false theories about biological differences between people based on the degree of African blood they have.

In 1890, for just one census cycle, categories like "mulatto" "quadroon" and "octoroon" were available on the census.

But by 1930 statisticians acknowledged these categories were subjective and largely insignificant and replaced these subcategories with "Negro" while also adding categories for people from South and East Asia, Native Americans, and Mexicans or Mexican Americans.

But the spread of Jim Crow from 1850 into the 1960s, meant that the census' data collection on race was often tied to ensuring that certain people could not vote rather than providing an accurate and objective number on the population.

So race has been a contentious, and often very negative, category on the census for most of its history.

So why did it stick around to today?

Well, arguments by both the Census bureau and supporters of keeping race on the census point out that the issues with recording the race on the census (namely to gerrymandering or realigning congressional districts) can easily be flipped on its head.

Just as race has been used to redistrict certain areas that are largely populated by racial minorities and people with fewer financial resources, those same numbers can be used to raise cases in court against unfair redistricting lines that favor one party over another.

For example, people still live (either through social organizing or through economic stratification) in neighborhoods that can be racially or economically homogeneous, and race and class often align with people's political affiliations.

So, census data can prevent congressional districts from being drawn in ways that guarantee one party or type of candidate will always win a certain district, even if the majority of voters living in that district support an opposing party or candidate.

And because as of today the census is mandatory (unlike voting) it gives a fuller scope of the number of people actually residing in a state than the turnout of voters on election day.

So the census is the federal government's best chance to record the accurate number of people in each state, to make sure that everyone's vote can count equally, and to determine how federal funds are spent based on population.

And recording race on the census helps support redistricting in states like North Carolina as recently as this year (where congressional lines were found by federal courts to disproportionately disadvantage minority voters).

It's also been included as key evidence in a number of redistricting cases throughout 20th and 21st century.

So this seems to be the matter of same data with different objectives.

It doesn't downplay that the history of recording race on the census was alarmingly negative, but rather says that the recording of race isn't the inherent issue at hand but rather how lawmakers choose to use that information for the public good (or not).

And every time a new question is added to the census or removed, it sparks ongoing debate about what should be recorded and how that information is being used, whether it be for the public good or for more partisan efforts.

This debate is rearing its head yet again as we head towards the 2020 census.

Well there you have it.

The only two things that have stayed pretty much consistent in collecting data for the census is recording race...and calling census workers "enumerators." And while that name comes across as pretty dry, the debate about how and why the government is recording race is anything but.

And while the history of race on the census is largely rooted in disenfranchisement, that same info has often been taken in the last several decades to fight disenfranchisement.

Because the questions that researchers ask are often just as critical if not more so than the information they collect.

Our personal perspectives and arguments influence, shape, and change the outcomes of studies just as much as the results themselves.

And that means there aren't really any strictly objective questions because those questions are driven by very real, sometimes good and sometimes not so good, human motivations.

So what do you think?

Anything to add on how recording race on the census impacts your vote?

Any other information to share?

Be sure to drop all of those comments, questions, and debates down below, subscribe to Origin

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Transcript for Figure 6.6, The 2020 Census is about Money and Power

[Speaker 1]: What's different about the 2020 census is this is the first year folks will be able to self respond online, on the phone, or by mail.

[Speaker 2]: Which, for a mom like me, with two kids 5 and under, is really important.

[Speaker 3, in Spanish.]

[Speaker 4]: The census is important because it's about power and money.

[Speaker 5]: There's 7 trillion dollars at stake over the next decade.

[Speaker 1]: And that's so important and critical for Oregon because that funds programs like Head Start, hospitals, roads, and Medicaid.

[Speaker 6]: Black and indigenous women of color are at the forefront of this movement.

[Speaker 4]: It's a chance for us as communities of color to show who we are.

[Speaker 7]: Because we've experienced what it's like to be left out, what it's like to be undercounted. And women of color, and our families, deserve better services.

[Speaker 8]: This census, we're right on the cusp of getting a sixth Congressional seat, which means that we could have an additional voice representing us in Congress.

[Speaker 9]: The census is safe. I know that there are a lot of concerns for different communities.

[Speaker 10, in Spanish.]

[Speaker 8]: It's so important that every single Oregonian take the census.

[Speaker 9]: So with that being said, I hope that everyone plays their part in making sure every individual is counted in the 2020 census.

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Transcript for Figure 6.13, Who Leads Us?

Have you ever wondered what does America actually look like? Let's zoom out from the people we see in the media and the people we talk to every day and look at the big picture. About three hundred and fourteen million of us live in the United States. Fifty-one percent of us are women and 49 percent of us are men. Sixty-three percent of us are white; 37 percent of us are people of color. Our country is changing fast, but are the people who represent us from City Council to Congress keeping up with that change?

Do we live in a reflective democracy? We did some research, and here's what we found. We studied 42,000 elected officials who represent us from the county level all the way up to Congress. If they reflected America's population, our elected officials should look like this, but it actually looks like this: 71 percent of elected officials are men; 90 percent are white, and 65 percent are white men. That means men have three times as much power as women, and white Americans also have three times as much power as people of color. White men have eight times as much power as women of color.

When 31% of the population controls 65 percent of elected offices, is it a surprise that most Americans feel our democracy is

broken?

To learn more about the data we've collected, visit us at who leads us and share the data with your friends. Then tell us at who leads us how you think we can become a more reflective democracy.

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Transcript for Figure 6.21, Dr Martin Luther King: I Have a Dream

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Introducing speaker:

I have the pleasure to present to you Dr. Martin Luther King.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, “When will you be satisfied?” We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. **We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro’s basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: “For Whites Only.”** We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until “justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest — quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of “interposition” and “nullification” — one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; “and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.”2

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day — this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

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Transcript for Figure 6.25, Social Identities

Hi. I'm Kim Puttman. I'm a sociologist and author at Oregon Coast Community College.

Hi, I'm Liz Pearce. I teach in human development and family sciences at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon. These videos are being made for Open Oregon Educational Resources.

In this video, we will focus on the social characteristics or social identities that we all possess as part of identity. We will clarify the distinctions between race, ethnicity, and culture, and between sex, gender, and sexuality. We will also discuss intersectionality and identity.

Before we get to the social characteristics, let's take a brief look at the other main aspects of identity. The inner ring of the wheel explores internal characteristics. Internal characteristics include your values, beliefs, commitments, motivations, and personality characteristics. I have unique motivations and beliefs. I am motivated to make a difference in the world for the better. I believe that we can make the United States a more equitable place.

I am motivated to create communities of respect and belonging. I believe that the personal is the political, changing the world through my everyday interactions.

Let's look at the outer ring of the identity wheel, roles and relationships. My identity also includes the roles I play and the relationships I have. For example, I would describe myself this way. I'm a teacher. I'm a mother. I'm a hiker.

I am also a teacher. I am a writer and an activist, an interfaith minister, a wife, and most recently a grandmother and great aunt.

Now let's look at those social characteristics in the middle ring. Your social identity includes all of who you are. It is the combination of your social identities or the intersections of these characteristics. Many of us identify with a couple aspects of our social identity more strongly than others. Although we define our own identities, the ways that others perceive our identities shape us as well. How we see ourselves is important. We are complicated and we can't be reduced to just one characteristic. We aren't just gay or male or Muslim or that person in the wheelchair. We live in the intersection of all of our identities.

Let's review a little bit for you. We have body size, whether bigger or smaller than is typical or considered typical, age, religion, the first language you learn to speak, geography, your physical location, both whether you live in a rural, suburban, or urban setting, as well as what part of the country or world you live in. Nationality, whether you identify with a country you were born in, the country your parents are born in, or the country in which you reside. Socioeconomic status, SES, sometimes called social class, but SES refers to your income, your career status, and your education level all together. Health, the robustness or vulnerability of your physical or mental health. Ability, whether you see yourself as disabled or able-bodied or as more people are saying temporarily-abled, which describes the reality that most of us will experience some form of disability in our lives. And neuro-diversity, whether the way you think and learn is considered to be typical or if and how it diverges in some way.

You might have noticed that a few social identities in this wheel were skipped. We will look at these next because they are highly related to one another, overlap with each other, and sometimes are confused.

Let's provide a little bit more of an explanation about sex, gender or gender identity, and sexuality and how they relate to one another. The basic definition of sex is based on biology. Typically, that means that sex assigned at birth and might be seen as the best guess based on a baby's physical characteristics at birth. Gender identity is the way we socially express our sex identification. Some theorists say that people do gender in their everyday interactions. Stereotypical feminine characteristics include wearing dresses and high heels or speaking more softly. Stereotypical masculine characteristics include taking up more space or talking more. However, gender expression goes beyond female and male. People are exploring new ways of expressing their gender and new language to label it.

Cisgender means that you express your gender in the way that reflects your sex assigned at birth in the way that society typically expects you to. Transgender refers to identifying with a gender other than the one assigned to you at birth. Gender nonconformity rejects the binary system of gender and sees it as more of a continuum. You may not know other language that helps you or others define gender identity. Sexuality is about your sexual orientation. It's not just who you have sex with but who you're attracted to, who you have feelings for, what your capacities and interests are related to sexuality. There are many ways of identifying yourself authentically and labels for that experience.

LGBTQIA plus is a common acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersexual, and asexual and more. This acronym mixes gender identity and sexual identity. And while it contains some of the identity options around sexuality, there are new ones emerging all the time. Heterosexual or straight, are the most common terms for people who are attracted to opposite sex partners. Labels for sexuality continue to evolve. Even if we describe the most recent term for sexuality here, it will have changed by the time you see this video. What is the most recent label you have heard of?

Now let's look at the relationships between race, ethnicity, and culture. Just as a reminder, race is a social construction, a construction that is based on physical characteristics. It still divides people into groups and it affects how people are treated. Race is a social identity.

When we talk about ethnicity, we mean a social group that shares language and behavior and often shares a geography or ancestry. Some people identify as Irish even if they don't live in Ireland. Although their race is most commonly White, their ethnicity might be Irish if they share Irish culture, identify as Catholic or Protestant, celebrate Irish holidays, or, in some cases, speak Gaelic. In fact, more Irish people live outside of Ireland than within that country. Similarly, Hispanic or Latinx is an ethnicity not a race because people who identify as Hispanic or Latinx can be of any race. However, people in this group are often from South and Central America and speak Spanish or Portuguese. They share customs and experiences. Sometimes people confuse ethnicity and culture. Irish and Hispanic or Latinx people have their own distinct cultures. However, the concept of culture is much broader than that. Culture is shared beliefs, values, and practices which are socially transmitted. Culture focuses more on

behaviors and interactions that are shared and learned through socialization. A culture can be shared not only through ethnicity but through religion, geographic location, or any community or social group.

All of these are social characteristics or social identities. Every person has all of these identities, but we typically identify more and less strongly with a few of them. Our identities contain overlapping privileges and oppressions known as intersectionality. Intersectionality is defined as overlapping social identities which produce unique inequities that influence the lives of people and groups. Kimberly Crenshaw created the term intersectionality to clarify the experience of Black women. They were excluded from the experience of women, which traditionally included White women. They were excluded from the experiences of Black, which traditionally included Black men. Instead, they had their own unique relationship with power and privilege as Black women. This initial specific definition of intersectionality is now being more widely applied to many constellations of identities which experience oppression.

We all have overlapping identities that contribute to our unique selves, but not all of us have intersectional identities. If you have several identities that typically face discrimination or oppression, you have an intersectional social identity. Our intersectional identities contribute to how much privilege we experience and how much oppression we experience. For example, I identify as a cisgendered woman who is gay. Both of these identities have less privilege than the identities of being male and heterosexual. So those are intersectional for me. I am also part of more privileged identities being White and middle class. I may not notice that I have a race and a class because I am part of the typical or more privileged group. But I'm more aware of being gay and being a woman and the discrimination that can come with each of these identities.

Similarly, I am White, middle class, and educated. However, I am also Buddhist, queer, and female. I actively resist the oppression I experience as a non-Christian, woman-loving woman. It is more challenging to notice the privilege I experience as White, middle class, and educated. These privileges helped me to thrive despite oppression.

Social identity is an essential way that we experience the world. Take some time to consider the overlapping identities that contribute to your overall unique identity and experience with the world. Consider the ways that intersectionality affects others, especially those that have different social identities than you have. Understanding social identities is a way to better understand yourself and the world around you.

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Transcript for Figure 7.2, Stigma – Social and self

[Voiceover]: Social stigma is the really extreme disapproval and discrediting of an individual by society. But actually, stigma comes in two different forms. The first is social stigma, and the second is self-stigma.

Now, when we mention social stigma, what are we talking about? Well, social stigma can be fueled or associated with several other key concepts, and these include stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination. One of the challenges is that the degree of overlap between stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination, and stigma is not entirely clear and appears to be somewhat variable depending on the source.

We commonly encounter social stigma when we are looking at conditions such as medical or mental health conditions, or other issues such as sexual orientation or criminality. A stigma against mental health is a major challenge. So let's try to look at that a little bit more closely in this example.

In this example, many individuals may believe that the mentally ill are violent. This is an example of a stereotype, in that it involves a belief or a cognition that is generalized to a population. If this cognition subsequently leads to a negative emotion or a negative affect being associated with it, then this, then, would be an example of a prejudice. In our example, if I start to become scared of the mentally ill, that would be a prejudice. Finally, if, through stereotypes and prejudices, we actually have a change in our behavior, this can lead to discrimination. A discriminatory behavior would be if we are scared of the mentally ill, we may not want to live close to them or, for example, hire them in our workplace.

Social stigma and the components of social stigma can vary a great deal by the sociopolitical context. Sexual orientation, for

example. Now that we've mentioned social stigma, let us look at self-stigma.

And one of the things that can happen with an individual is that they can really internalize all the negative stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory experiences that they have. As they internalize these negative stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory behaviors, they may feel rejected by society, they may feel like they need to avoid interacting with society, they may really struggle to come to grips with their condition. For example, someone who has HIV or AIDS and really feels the social stigma may go into denial and deny to themselves that they have the condition, and not receive medical follow-up. They may also experience hits on their self-esteem or suffer from other mental health conditions, such as depression, and then, they themselves may display behaviors that really isolate them from society and stop them from even attempting to take part in education, vocation, thereby further isolating them.

So it appears that not only is the stigma directed from society and other groups towards an individual important, but also the stigma that's directed by the individual towards him or herself is also important. Let us also consider studying stigma by using these concentric circles. In the middle, I'm going to label the first circle as 'self,' representing the individual who is stigmatized. The second circle shall represent the family or the close social group. The third circle shall represent wider society, and finally, the fourth circle shall represent things external to society but that are very important, such as the media.

One thing that we should appreciate is that there are bi-directional relationships between all of these groups, such as the self and the family, the self and society, the self and the media, and also in between all of these groups, such as society and family, such as the media and society.

So let's have a closer look at these groups as we peel off the concentric circles. Let's start by looking at the influence of the media. The media is a major source of stigma because it can have depictions of various conditions as being violent, dangerous, or representing moral failings, as is commonly the case when we encounter representations of mental illness in the media, but it can also be encountered in other conditions that are depicted in the media, such as HIV and AIDS, obesity, and people who have substance use problems.

A useful intervention at this point is the development of guidelines for journalists to try and decrease the amount of stigma that is present in the media, and there are several different sets of guidelines and suggestions in order to do this. And when we mention media, we know that social media is also a huge component.

Now, let's move on to society. Society is also very important because this is where the interactions between the self and society involve things like education, employment, healthcare. Stigmatizing views by employers, by healthcare providers can really diminish the access of individuals to earning an income, to getting the proper level of healthcare, to even turning up for a screening, getting follow-up, and an important intervention at this point is the use of legislation and anti-discrimination laws.

Now, let's consider the family. Now, the interesting thing here is that the family can not only be shunned by society if they have somebody with a stigmatizing condition, but the family may also shun the individual themselves. In this example, we may often see somebody in the family who has a stigmatizing condition to be hidden, kept away from the family, to really be isolated and almost kept as a secret within the family. So if we look at our concentric circles, the family can be stigmatized by society but can also stigmatize the individual, so this also may be detrimental to personal or intimate relationships.

So at this point, interventions such as therapy and education are also very important. Finally, we reach the very core of the structure, which is the individual with the condition or the self. And in this case, we know that all these different interactions, media, society, and the family, the individual can internalize a lot of this different stigma, and that can lead to them avoiding situations, denying the existence of their condition, suffering from mental health conditions, and no longer really participating in society. Useful interventions at this point would be to educate the patient, to give them access to resources, support groups, and these resources would really help them to understand that they're not alone.

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Transcript for Figure 7.5, Aletha Maybank, MD, MPH, Discusses COVID-19 and Health Equity

[Todd Unger]: American Medical Association's COVID-19 update. Today we're discussing health equity as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. I'm joined today by Dr. Aletha Maybank, the AMA's chief health equity officer, talking to us from New York City. I'm Todd Unger, AMA's chief experience officer in Chicago. Dr. Maybank, the initial data coming out of the states is painting a pretty alarming picture in terms of health disparities. Can you tell us what you're seeing?

[Dr. Aletha Maybank]: Hi, Todd. Good afternoon. Good to be with you. We have been seeing, and I think our alarms had been triggered over a month ago when we recognized, when the data was coming out as a relates to cases and deaths, that a lot of the data was not reporting out on or the states weren't reporting out, CDC was not reporting out on race and ethnicity.

And for us who are in the equity space, just overall, not even just health equity, that was really concerning because what we understand, historically in our country and also just what we understand even in recent history, that for the most part, if our health as black and brown communities shows that it's worse, we have lower life expectancies, there was this realization and awareness and curiosity about, so what's happening as it relates to COVID?

There really were somewhat predictions by folks who are in the health equity space that this was going to definitely impact the black community, but other racially marginalized groups, potentially, immigrants, Latinx, Native Americans. Part of this is from experience of knowing what has happened in previous disasters such as Katrina and the disproportionate impact that it had on black folks. Also, H1N1 of the data as it relates to that as well. So, there was an organizing that started to happen across the country, where health equity leaders started to really voice the concern. You saw the Twitter flow, putting out the message. Then you started to see op-eds from many different folks and leaders across disciplines about the importance of reporting out on this data. We put out a New York Times op-ed about two weeks ago now.

Also, calling upon Health and Human Services [HHS] and its sub-agencies to release the data as well as state and local health departments. We sent a letter to HHS in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, the National Medical Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, the Association of Indian Physicians and the National Council of Asian-Pacific Islander Physicians as well. That letter definitely generated a lot of attention and response back from HHS, to really see that physician organizations were paying attention to this. They definitely heard advocacy from other folks even before us, but I think the physician letter also sparked something else.

[Unger]: Let me ask you a question.

[Dr. Maybank]: Sure.

[Unger]: What's the obstacle in getting that data? Why are we in this position where you're having to be so vocal about getting it in the first place?

[Dr. Maybank]: Yeah, I think it's a great question. There are many factors that are prohibiting us from having that data just even before, pre-COVID. Really not all systems have been consistently collecting racial and ethnicity data. They're not standardized necessarily to collect it in consistent ways, even though there's guidance and there are other opportunities to follow the path of how this data is collected. I think the other part, there is a central form that CDC has, but folks also are not necessarily taking the time out to fill out race and ethnicity data, and what also makes it harder usually, is that you're supposed to ask the individual, what is their race and ethnicity? They're supposed to be able to self-report and self-identify, not have somebody else identify.

So, you can imagine a time of emergency, if you have not thought about how to do that beforehand, it's not going to be the default for folks to fill out that information.

Then this weekend, we have some family members that have tested positive for COVID, even passed away and we felt it was important that several of us, including myself, go for testing. We called the state up earlier in the week, got an appointment for a drive through tests, and I'm paying attention to every aspect of what it's like to go through this testing center.

It was very clear, there's nothing and no way for them to have collected race and ethnicity data information, right. There are gaps at many levels. Then, the other reality is, even if all those pieces were perfect that I've mentioned, there are gaps with black and brown folks being able to actually access testing.

One, there's just, there's not enough testing. Two, we're not clear what's happening when folks are going to the health care

institutions and getting turned away. Oftentimes across the country, the public health messaging has been to stay home. If you have symptoms, and they're mild, you stay home. If they're severe enough you go to the emergency room. So, there are many people who are probably staying home for sure, that we're going to have under-counting.

But in addition to that, there have been several stories over the last – news stories over the last week – highlighting black folks going back to the ER three to four times and getting sent back home, even when they have symptoms, and dying in their homes. So, there are things related to clearly institutional racism and bias that has always existed and still exist to this day, and it just really exacerbates itself, really shines a light during this time.

[Unger]: When you think about getting the data that you need, why is that so important about going forward? What are you going to do with that, and how do we help solve these health disparities?

[Dr. Maybank]: Yeah, I think with data—I mean, most folks in public health and in health care would say, you can't really address what you can't measure and we need the data in order to have complete comprehensive public health responses and approaches and strategies on how to help promote the health, how to help set up an emergency preparedness system, but response systems, not just for the folks that it's really obvious for, for those who are marginalized in our communities in our society.

We need that data in order to track trends over time, to see what's happening. Data, as we know in the census, is a prime example of this is an important part of where funding goes, how funding is distributed and redistributed. If we don't have the data, there's a chance that we won't be able to figure out where funding needs to go, and how it needs to be allocated to the communities that are suffering the greatest burden from COVID in the country.

[Unger]: Well, we are already seeing a lot of disparities in some of what would be considered the underlying conditions associated with really bad outcomes in COVID. Going forward, how do we address those disparities in whether it's hypertension or diabetes and other ones along those lines?

[Dr. Maybank]: Sure. That's the messaging out there and what the science is telling us and what the data is telling us, right? That those who have these underlying conditions that you just mentioned are more likely to have severe consequences of COVID. Fortunately, we're working on hypertension and chronic diseases at the AMA. We have some large efforts around that, but again, this is a framing, and narrative issue that I think is absolutely important for where we go for policy and advocacy, as well as how that advocacy also leads to funding.

What I mean is underlying conditions in terms of health and physical health of those that are mentioned are absolutely important and critical to know, so we're clear that black people in this country are more likely to suffer from those particular underlying conditions. But we also have to look at the underlying conditions of the communities in which they live, the realities of them having to be frontline workers and essential workers often at disposal. We have to look at the situations around housing and how in many of our urban areas, housing is overcrowded, right?

All of these conditions, these are also underlying conditions that contribute to the severity and the experience that black people are going through, are all a result of structures, policies, laws that had been put in place. So that, when we think of solutions, our solutions can't just be at the downstream parts of this in terms of COVID and what's happening in the health care system. It's important. I'm not saying it's not important. It's critical. We have to focus on the health care system.

[Unger]: Yeah. Would you say that a lot of these concepts around social distancing are just not practical?

[Dr. Maybank]: Yeah, they are. I mean it doesn't, social distancing, physical distancing. I've talked about wearing the face masks and the challenges of that, based on the experience of many black men and their experience with police. There are already stories of where folks had been arrested for having them on as folks have been arrested for not having them on. There's that. There's hand-washing, the quality of water in certain communities isn't great. In Native American communities, they don't even have running water in some places. We've heard, and actually in some public housing developments across the country that running water's shut off. So, the ability to wash your hands becomes very difficult, and the ability to stay home.

All these really important public health measures, really have to be nuanced for communities so that they have a sense of what they do and have some sense of power to do something for their own lives and their own realities and not be ignored and not be invisible and made invisible by many of our system structures and messaging.

[Unger]: What are you hearing from physicians of color, many of whom are treating vulnerable populations, about their experience during this pandemic?

[Dr. Maybank]: We had a conversation a couple of weeks ago with some of the groups that I mentioned earlier, and also talking to physicians within my network. I mean, the reality is, as you mentioned, more likely to see patients who are racially marginalized and so they're dealing with that kind of reality and how to address their concerns, how to address the social needs within the context of all that. How do families grieve and dealing with the emotional aspects of going through COVID and being ignored? They're also then dealing with their own realities, of being many first-generation physicians of color who may not have the backbone or the foundation of wealth that many other physicians that are white have, as well as medical students have, in terms of having generational wealth and being able to figure out ways to potentially survive easier during this time.

I'm not saying this experience is easy for anybody. It's not, when you have to expose and put yourself at risk every single day on the front line. But there are conditions, as I mentioned before, that are underlying that actually help these physicians feel the weight of COVID even further. We know that there are, the Native American physicians especially, are very stretched, stretched pretty thinly across reservations, and there's a great burden of disease on Native American reservations that is really not talked about that much at all.

For Latino physicians and black physicians, the private practice, solo practice is the backbone of physician work in the community. Many folks are having to lay off, having to shut down or lay off their staff, and they're just figuring out how to survive and support their staff as well as still support their patients, as well as still support themselves and their own families.

[Unger]: Well, Dr. Maybank, thank you very much for your insights and your continued work in health equity. That's it for today's COVID-19 update.

For more information and resources about COVID-19, like our new Health Equity Resource Center, please go to ama-assn.org/COVID-19. Thanks for being with us today.

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Transcript for Figure 7.16, 2017 Income, Poverty and Health Insurance – Health Insurance Presentation

Health insurance coverage is an important measure of our nation's overall well-being. Whether it's illness, injury, or preventative needs, health insurance provides greater access to medical care, protection from high unexpected costs, and more economic stability.

Each year, the Census Bureau provides data on health insurance coverage. We look at who is and isn't covered, where they live, and what type of insurance they have. Policymakers use this information to make data-driven decisions.

The health insurance estimates released today come from two surveys. The Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement ask people about their health insurance coverage at any time in the previous calendar year. Most of the national-level results presented today come from this survey. The American Community Survey asks people about their coverage at the time of the interview. Due to its larger sample size, the American Community Survey is the recommended source of health insurance statistics for smaller populations and levels of geography.

Let me begin by summarizing the main findings. This year, an estimated 8.8% of the population, or about 28.5 million people, did not have health insurance coverage at any point in 2017. The uninsured rate and the number of uninsured in 2017 were not statistically different from 2016.

Between 2016 and 2017, the percentage of people uninsured at the time of their interview decreased in three states and increased in 14 states.

In 2017, most people (91.2%) had health insurance coverage at some point during the calendar year, with more people having private health insurance (67.2%) than government coverage (37.7%).

Looking at subtypes of health insurance, employer-based insurance was the most common, covering 56% of the population, followed by Medicaid, Medicare, direct purchase (which includes health insurance exchanges), and military health care.

The larger sample size of the American Community Survey allows us to observe characteristics in greater detail, and because the survey asks about current coverage, we have the opportunity to examine how health insurance status varies by single year of age.

In 2017, 26-year-olds had the highest uninsured rate at 17.8%. Three notable sharp differences exist between single age years: specifically between 18 and 19-year-olds, between 25 and 26-year-olds, and between 64 and 65-year-olds. These differences correspond to common age-related eligibility thresholds for coverage, including CHIP, dependent coverage, and Medicare.

Over time, changes in the rate of health insurance coverage and the distribution of coverage types may reflect economic trends, shifts in the demographic composition of the population, and policy changes that affect access to care. Several such policy changes occurred in 2014 when many provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act went into effect.

This chart shows the change in percentages of people with health insurance coverage between 2016 and 2017 on the left and between 2013 and 2017 on the right. The percentage of people covered by any type of health insurance for at least some time during 2017 was 91.2%.

Starting with the left side of the chart, we see that the overall coverage rate is not statistically different from the rate in 2016. Between 2016 and 2017, the rate of Medicare coverage increased by 0.6 percentage points to cover 17.2% of people for part or all of 2017. This increase was partly due to an increase in the number of people aged 65 and over. The military coverage rate increased by 0.2 percentage points to 4.8% during this time. Between 2016 and 2017, there was no statistically significant change for any other subtype of health insurance shown here.

Moving to the right side of the chart, we see the change in health insurance coverage rates since 2013, the baseline year before many provisions of the Affordable Care Act went into effect. The uninsured rate decreased by 4.5 percentage points between 2013 and 2017. The rate of private coverage increased by 3 percentage points in this period. Of the two subtypes of private coverage, only direct purchase health insurance significantly changed during this period. The government coverage rate increased by 3.2 percentage points. The coverage rate increased for all of the subtypes of government coverage: Medicare, Medicaid, and military health care.

Variation in the uninsured rate at the sub-national level may be related to whether the state expanded Medicaid eligibility as part of the Affordable Care Act. This chart categorizes states into two groups: those that expanded eligibility and those that did not. Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia expanded Medicaid eligibility on or before January 1, 2017. 9.4% of the population aged 19 to 64 living in expansion states had no health insurance coverage at any time in 2017, not statistically different from the percentage in 2016. In non-expansion states, 16.7% of the population had no health insurance coverage during 2017, up from 16.1% in 2016. In both expansion states and non-expansion states, the uninsured rate for working-age adults in 2017 was lower than in 2013.

While it is useful to look at the states grouped by expansion status, there's more to the story. The American Community Survey allows us to examine uninsured rates at the state level. On this map, the darkest blue shading is applied to states where the percentage of people uninsured at the time of interview was 14% or higher. Lighter shades represent lower uninsured rates, with the lightest blue category representing an uninsured rate of less than 8%. Two states, Oklahoma and Texas, are in the darkest shade of blue for 2017, and 25 states and the District of Columbia are in the lightest shade of blue.

This map presents the change in uninsured rates between 2016 and 2017. The percentage of people without health insurance coverage decreased in three states and increased in 14 states. Statistically significant decreases ranged from 0.2 to 1.9 percentage points, and increases ranged from 0.32 to 1 percentage point.

More information is available in our reports and online.

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Transcript for Figure 7.23, Sleep Is Your Superpower

Thank you very much.

Well, I would like to start with testicles.

Men who sleep five hours a night have significantly smaller testicles than those who sleep seven hours or more. In addition, men who routinely sleep just four to five hours a night will have a level of testosterone which is that of someone 10 years their senior.

So a lack of sleep will age a man by a decade in terms of that critical aspect of wellness. And we see equivalent impairments in female reproductive health caused by a lack of sleep. This is the best news that I have for you today.

From this point, it may only get worse. Not only will I tell you about the wonderfully good things that happen when you get sleep, but the alarmingly bad things that happen when you don't get enough, both for your brain and for your body.

Let me start with the brain and the functions of learning and memory, because what we've discovered over the past 10 or so years is that you need sleep after learning to essentially hit the save button on those new memories so that you don't forget.

But recently, we discovered that you also need sleep before learning to actually prepare your brain, almost like a dry sponge ready to initially soak up new information. And without sleep, the memory circuits of the brain essentially become waterlogged, as it were, and you can't absorb new memories. So let me show you the data.

Here in this study, we decided to test the hypothesis that pulling the all-nighter was a good idea. So we took a group of individuals and we assigned them to one of two experimental groups: a sleep group and a sleep deprivation group.

Now the sleep group, they're going to get a full eight hours of slumber, but the deprivation group, we're going to keep them awake in the laboratory, under full supervision. There's no naps or caffeine, by the way, so it's miserable for everyone involved.

And then the next day, we're going to place those participants inside an MRI scanner and we're going to have them try and learn a whole list of new facts as we're taking snapshots of brain activity.

And then we're going to test them to see how effective that learning has been. And that's what you're looking at here on the vertical axis. And when you put those two groups head to head, what you find is a quite significant, 40% deficit in the ability of the brain to make new memories without sleep.

I think this should be concerning, considering what we know is happening to sleep in our education populations right now. In fact, to put that in context, it would be the difference in a child acing an exam versus failing it miserably – 40%.

And we've gone on to discover what goes wrong within your brain to produce these types of learning disabilities. And there's a structure that sits on the left and the right side of your brain, called the hippocampus.

And you can think of the hippocampus almost like the informational inbox of your brain. It's very good at receiving new memory files and then holding on to them. And when you look at this structure in those people who'd had a full night of sleep, we saw lots of healthy learning-related activity.

Yet in those people who were sleep-deprived, we actually couldn't find any significant signal whatsoever. So it's almost as though sleep deprivation had shut down your memory inbox, and any new incoming files — they were just being bounced. You couldn't effectively commit new experiences to memory.

So that's the bad that can happen if I were to take sleep away from you, but let me just come back to that control group for a second.

Do you remember those folks that got a full eight hours of sleep? Well, we can ask a very different question: What is it about the physiological quality of your sleep when you do get it that restores and enhances your memory and learning ability each and every day?

And by placing electrodes all over the head, what we've discovered is that there are big, powerful brainwaves that happen during the very deepest stages of sleep that have riding on top of them these spectacular bursts of electrical activity that we call sleep spindles.

And it's the combined quality of these deep-sleep brainwaves that acts like a file-transfer mechanism at night, shifting memories from a short-term vulnerable reservoir to a more permanent long-term storage site within the brain, and therefore protecting them, making them safe.

And it is important that we understand what during sleep actually transacts these memory benefits, because there are real medical and societal implications. And let me just tell you about one area that we've moved this work out into, clinically, which is the context of aging and dementia.

Because it's of course no secret that, as we get older, our learning and memory abilities begin to fade and decline. But what we've also discovered is that a physiological signature of aging is that your sleep gets worse, especially that deep quality of sleep that I was just discussing.

And only last year, we finally published evidence that these two things, they're not simply co-occurring, they are significantly interrelated. And it suggests that the disruption of deep sleep is an underappreciated factor that is contributing to cognitive decline or memory decline in aging, and most recently we've discovered, in Alzheimer's disease as well.

Now, I know this is remarkably depressing news. It's in the mail. It's coming at you. But there's a potential silver lining here.

Unlike many of the other factors that we know are associated with aging, for example changes in the physical structure of the brain, that's fiendishly difficult to treat. But that sleep is a missing piece in the explanatory puzzle of aging and Alzheimer's is exciting because we may be able to do something about it.

And one way that we are approaching this at my sleep center is not by using sleeping pills, by the way. Unfortunately, they are blunt instruments that do not produce naturalistic sleep.

Instead, we're actually developing a method based on this. It's called direct current brain stimulation. You insert a small amount of voltage into the brain, so small you typically don't feel it, but it has a measurable impact.

Now if you apply this stimulation during sleep in young, healthy adults, as if you're sort of singing in time with those deep-sleep brainwaves, not only can you amplify the size of those deep-sleep brainwaves, but in doing so, we can almost double the amount of memory benefit that you get from sleep.

The question now is whether we can translate this same affordable, potentially portable piece of technology into older adults and those with dementia.

Can we restore back some healthy quality of deep sleep, and in doing so, can we salvage aspects of their learning and memory function? That is my real hope now. That's one of our moon-shot goals, as it were. So that's an example of sleep for your brain, but sleep is just as essential for your body.

We've already spoken about sleep loss and your reproductive system. Or I could tell you about sleep loss and your cardiovascular system, and that all it takes is one hour.

Because there is a global experiment performed on 1.6 billion people across 70 countries twice a year, and it's called daylight saving time.

Now, in the spring, when we lose one hour of sleep, we see a subsequent 24% increase in heart attacks that following day. In the autumn, when we gain an hour of sleep, we see a 21% reduction in heart attacks. Isn't that incredible?

And you see exactly the same profile for car crashes, road traffic accidents, even suicide rates.

But as a deeper dive, I want to focus on this: sleep loss and your immune system. And here, I'll introduce these delightful blue elements in the image. They are called natural killer cells, and you can think of natural killer cells almost like the secret service agents of your immune system. They are very good at identifying dangerous, unwanted elements and eliminating them.

In fact, what they're doing here is destroying a cancerous tumor mass. So what you wish for is a virile set of these immune assassins at all times, and tragically, that's what you don't have if you're not sleeping enough.

So here in this experiment, you're not going to have your sleep deprived for an entire night, you're simply going to have your sleep restricted to four hours for one single night, and then we're going to look to see what's the percent reduction in immune cell activity that you suffer. And it's not small — it's not 10%, it's not 20%. There was a 70% drop in natural killer cell activity.

That's a concerning state of immune deficiency, and you can perhaps understand why we're now finding significant links between short sleep duration and your risk for the development of numerous forms of cancer.

Currently, that list includes cancer of the bowel, cancer of the prostate and cancer of the breast. In fact, the link between a lack of sleep and cancer is now so strong that the World Health Organization has classified any form of nighttime shift work as a probable carcinogen, because of a disruption of your sleep-wake rhythms.

So you may have heard of that old maxim that you can sleep when you're dead. Well, I'm being quite serious now — it is mortally unwise advice. We know this from epidemiological studies across millions of individuals.

There's a simple truth: the shorter your sleep, the shorter your life. Short sleep predicts all-cause mortality. And if increasing your risk for the development of cancer or even Alzheimer's disease were not sufficiently disquieting, we have since discovered that a lack of sleep will even erode the very fabric of biological life itself, your DNA genetic code.

So here in this study, they took a group of healthy adults and they limited them to six hours of sleep a night for one week, and then they measured the change in their gene activity profile relative to when those same individuals were getting a full eight hours of sleep a night. And there were two critical findings.

First, a sizable and significant 711 genes were distorted in their activity, caused by a lack of sleep. The second result was that about half of those genes were actually increased in their activity. The other half were decreased.

Now those genes that were switched off by a lack of sleep were genes associated with your immune system, so once again, you can see that immune deficiency. In contrast, those genes that were actually upregulated or increased by way of a lack of sleep, were genes associated with the promotion of tumors, genes associated with long-term chronic inflammation within the body, and genes associated with stress, and, as a consequence, cardiovascular disease.

There is simply no aspect of your wellness that can retreat at the sign of sleep deprivation and get away unscathed. It's rather like a broken water pipe in your home.

Sleep loss will leak down into every nook and cranny of your physiology, even tampering with the very DNA nucleic alphabet that spells out your daily health narrative.

And at this point, you may be thinking, "Oh my goodness, how do I start to get better sleep? What are your tips for good sleep?"

Well, beyond avoiding the damaging and harmful impact of alcohol and caffeine on sleep, and if you're struggling with sleep at night, avoiding naps during the day, I have two pieces of advice for you.

The first is regularity. Go to bed at the same time, wake up at the same time, no matter whether it's the weekday or the weekend. Regularity is king, and it will anchor your sleep and improve the quantity and the quality of that sleep.

The second is keep it cool. Your body needs to drop its core temperature by about two to three degrees Fahrenheit to initiate sleep and then to stay asleep, and it's the reason you will always find it easier to fall asleep in a room that's too cold than too hot.

So aim for a bedroom temperature of around 65 degrees, or about 18 degrees Celsius. That's going to be optimal for the sleep of most people.

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So aim for a bedroom temperature of around 65 degrees, or about 18 degrees Celsius. That's going to be optimal for the sleep of most people.

I believe it is now time for us to reclaim our right to a full night of sleep, and without embarrassment or that unfortunate stigma of laziness. And in doing so, we can be reunited with the most powerful elixir of life, the Swiss Army knife of health, as it were.

And with that soapbox rant over, I will simply say, good night, good luck, and above all...I do hope you sleep well.

Thank you very much indeed.

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Transcript for Figure 8.10, Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History

[SOUNDBITE OF COMEDY SPECIAL, "BRING THE PAIN"]

[Chris Rock]: You know what's so sad, man, you know what's wild? Martin Luther King stood for nonviolence. Now what's Martin Luther King? A street. And I don't give a fuck where you are in America, if you're on Martin Luther King Boulevard, there's some violence going down.

[Gene Demby, NPR]: That, of course, is Chris Rock's famous joke about streets named for Martin Luther King, Jr., which tend to be in, let's say, distressed areas. And he's not wrong, because if you look at the way housing segregation works in America, you can see how things ended up this way. Once you see it, you won't be able to unsee it.

OK, let's look at MLK Blvd. in Baltimore. I want to show you how to see housing segregation in schools, in health, in family wealth, in policing. But first, an explanatory comma.

It's the 1930s in the wake of the Great Depression. FDR is president. He wants to bring economic relief to millions of Americans through a collection of federal programs and projects called The New Deal. One part of that "New Deal" was The National Housing Act of 1934, which introduced ideas like the 30-year mortgage and low, fixed interest rates. So now you have all these lower-income people who can afford homes. But how do you make sure they don't default on their new mortgages? Enter the Home Owners Loan Corporation. The HOLC created residential security maps. And these maps? They're where the term "redlining" comes from.

Green meant "best area, best people," aka businessmen.

Blue meant "good people," like white-collar families.

Yellow meant "a declining area," with working class families.

And red meant "detrimental influences, hazardous" like "foreign-born" people, "low-class whites," and – most significantly – "Negroes."

Again and again on these HOLC maps, one of the most consistent criteria for redline neighborhoods is the presence of black and brown people.

Let's be clear. Studies show that people who lived in redlined areas were not necessarily more likely to default on their mortgages. But redlining made it difficult – if not impossible – to buy or refinance. So landlords abandon their properties. City services become unreliable. In most places, crime increases. And property values drop.

All of these conditions fester for 30 years as white people flee to the brand new suburbs popping up all over the country. Many of those suburbs institute rules, called covenants, that explicitly forbid selling homes to black people.

And all of this was perfectly legal.

Now, it's 1968, and MLK is assassinated.

[News broadcasts with headlines about MLK's death.]

In the aftermath, Congress passes the Fair Housing Act of 1968. It's a policy meant to encourage equal housing opportunities regardless of race, or religion, or national origin, and it offers protections for future homeowners and renters, but it does little to

fix the damage already done. Over the next 50 years, the Fair Housing Act is rarely enforced.

So you can still see housing segregation and its effects in Baltimore and often along any MLK Boulevard in any U.S. city.

Like its effects on wealth. So, home ownership is the major way Americans create wealth, right? Well, discrimination in housing is the major reason that black families up and down the income scale have a tiny fraction of the family wealth that white families do – even white families with less education and lower incomes. For almost 30 years, 98 percent of FHA loans were handed out to white borrowers.

Not only were black neighborhoods redlined, and not only was the Fair Housing Act selectively enforced, if at all, but it is still, today, much harder for a black person to get a mortgage or home loan than it is for a white person.

[John P. Comer, Architects for Justice]: Families are fearful of speaking up about a basic human right that should be afforded to everyone in the world, but definitely in the richest country in the world.

[Gene]: And housing segregation in schools. The primary way that Americans pay for public schools is by paying property taxes. People who live in more valuable homes have better funded local schools, better paid teachers, better school facilities and more resources.

Here's a feedback loop: The better the schools in a neighborhood, the more the homes in that neighborhood are worth. And the higher the property values of those homes, the more money there is for schools. And so on and so on.

And housing segregation in health. Because of urban planning that benefited those richer, whiter neighborhoods, people of color are more likely to live near industrial plants that spew toxic fumes; they're more likely to live far away from grocery stores with fresh food; and in places where the water isn't drinkable. They're more likely to live in neighborhoods with crumbling infrastructure, and in homes with toxic paint.

[Karen Holliday, Baltimore resident]: When you're living with rats, roaches, and things like that – that's deplorable. You cannot have that kind of stuff with children running around in a building, a building that may be full of lead.

[Gene]: And not coincidentally, people of color have higher incidences of certain cancers, asthma, and heart disease.

And housing segregation in policing. Housing segregation means we are having vastly different experiences with crime and vastly different experiences with policing. Because our neighborhoods are so segregated, sometimes racial profiling can be camouflaged as spatial profiling – where living in certain areas can make you more likely to be stopped by the police.

And it means that people have a lot of unnecessary contact with the criminal justice system just because of where they live.

[Reggie Greene and Keith Murchison, Baltimore residents]: The problem in our city? The police and the citizens are fighting. They keep targeting my brothers and sisters who don't really have nothing.

[Gene]: And that heavy, aggressive kind of policing that you see in black neighborhoods in particular makes people feel like they can't trust the police. And when people don't trust the police, crimes go unsolved and people have to find other ways to keep themselves safe.

But of course, it's not just Baltimore. Because housing segregation and discrimination fundamentally shape the lives of people in nearly every major American city. It really is in everything.

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Transcript for Figure 8.18, How to Revive a Neighborhood: with Imagination, Beauty, and Art

[Theaster Gates]: I'm a potter, which seems like a fairly humble vocation. I know a lot about pots. I've spent about 15 years making them. One of the things that really excites me in my artistic practice and being trained as a potter is that you very quickly learn how to make great things out of nothing; that I spent a lot of time at my wheel with mounds of clay trying stuff; and that the limitations of my capacity, my ability, was based on my hands and my imagination; that if I wanted to make a really nice bowl and I didn't know how to make a foot yet, I would have to learn how to make a foot; that that process of learning has been very, very helpful to my life. I feel like, as a potter, you also start to learn how to shape the world.

There have been times in my artistic capacity that I wanted to reflect on other really important moments in the history of the U.S., the history of the world where tough things happened, but how do you talk about tough ideas without separating people from that content? Could I use art like these old, discontinued firehoses from Alabama, to talk about the complexities of a moment of civil rights in the '60s? Is it possible to talk about my father and I doing labor projects? My dad was a roofer, construction guy, he owned small businesses, and at 80, he was ready to retire and his tar kettle was my inheritance. Now, a tar kettle doesn't sound like much of an inheritance. It wasn't. It was stinky and it took up a lot of space in my studio, but I asked my dad if he would be willing to make some art with me, if we could reimagine this kind of nothing material as something very special. And by elevating the material and my dad's skill, could we start to think about tar just like clay, in a new way, shaping it differently, helping us to imagine what was possible?

After clay, I was then kind of turned on to lots of different kinds of materials, and my studio grew a lot because I thought, well, it's not really about the material, it's about our capacity to shape things. I became more and more interested in ideas and more and more things that were happening just outside my studio. Just to give you a little bit of context, I live in Chicago. I live on the South Side now. I'm a West Sider. For those of you who are not Chicagoans, that won't mean anything, but if I didn't mention that I was a West Sider, there would be a lot of people in the city that would be very upset.

The neighborhood that I live in is Grand Crossing. It's a neighborhood that has seen better days. It is not a gated community by far. There is lots of abandonment in my neighborhood, and while I was kind of busy making pots and busy making art and having a good art career, there was all of this stuff that was happening just outside my studio. All of us know about failing housing markets and the challenges of blight, and I feel like we talk about it with some of our cities more than others, but I think a lot of our U.S. cities and beyond have the challenge of blight, abandoned buildings that people no longer know what to do anything with. And so I thought, is there a way that I could start to think about these buildings as an extension or an expansion of my artistic practice? And that if I was thinking along with other creatives — architects, engineers, real estate finance people — that us together might be able to kind of think in more complicated ways about the reshaping of cities.

And so I bought a building. The building was really affordable. We tricked it out. We made it as beautiful as we could to try to just get some activity happening on my block. Once I bought the building for about 18,000 dollars, I didn't have any money left. So I started sweeping the building as a kind of performance. This is performance art, and people would come over, and I would start sweeping. Because the broom was free and sweeping was free. It worked out. (Laughter) But we would use the building, then, to stage exhibitions, small dinners, and we found that that building on my block, Dorchester — we now referred to the block as Dorchester projects — that in a way that building became a kind of gathering site for lots of different kinds of activity. We turned the building into what we called now the Archive House. The Archive House would do all of these amazing things. Very significant people in the city and beyond would find themselves in the middle of the hood. And that's when I felt like maybe there was a relationship between my history with clay and this new thing that was starting to develop, that we were slowly starting to reshape how people imagined the South Side of the city.

One house turned into a few houses, and we always tried to suggest that not only is creating a beautiful vessel important, but the contents of what happens in those buildings is also very important. So we were not only thinking about development, but we were thinking about the program, thinking about the kind of connections that could happen between one house and another, between one neighbor and another. This building became what we call the Listening House, and it has a collection of discarded books from the Johnson Publishing Corporation, and other books from an old bookstore that was going out of business. I was actually just wanting to activate these buildings as much as I could with whatever and whoever would join me.

In Chicago, there's amazing building stock. This building, which had been the former crack house on the block, and when the building became abandoned, it became a great opportunity to really imagine what else could happen there. So this space we converted into what we call Black Cinema House. Black Cinema House was an opportunity in the hood to screen films that were important and relevant to the folk who lived around me, that if we wanted to show an old Melvin Van Peebles film, we could. If we wanted to show "Car Wash," we could. That would be awesome. The building we soon outgrew, and we had to move to a larger

space. Black Cinema House, which was made from just a small piece of clay, had to grow into a much larger piece of clay, which is now my studio.

What I realized was that for those of you who are zoning junkies, that some of the things that I was doing in these buildings that had been left behind, they were not the uses by which the buildings were built, and that there are city policies that say, “Hey, a house that is residential needs to stay residential.” But what do you do in neighborhoods when ain’t nobody interested in living there? That the people who have the means to leave have already left? What do we do with these abandoned buildings? And so I was trying to wake them up using culture.

We found that that was so exciting for folk, and people were so responsive to the work, that we had to then find bigger buildings. By the time we found bigger buildings, there was, in part, the resources necessary to think about those things. In this bank that we called the Arts Bank, it was in pretty bad shape. There was about six feet of standing water. It was a difficult project to finance, because banks weren’t interested in the neighborhood because people weren’t interested in the neighborhood because nothing had happened there. It was dirt. It was nothing. It was nowhere. And so we just started imagining, what else could happen in this building? (Applause)

And so now that the rumor of my block has spread, and lots of people are starting to visit, we’ve found that the bank can now be a center for exhibition, archives, music performance, and that there are people who are now interested in being adjacent to those buildings because we brought some heat, that we kind of made a fire.

One of the archives that we’ll have there is this Johnson Publishing Corporation. We’ve also started to collect memorabilia from American history, from people who live or have lived in that neighborhood. Some of these images are degraded images of black people, kind of histories of very challenging content, and where better than a neighborhood with young people who are constantly asking themselves about their identity to talk about some of the complexities of race and class?

In some ways, the bank represents a hub, that we’re trying to create a pretty hardcore node of cultural activity, and that if we could start to make multiple hubs and connect some cool green stuff around there, that the buildings that we’ve purchased and rehabbed, which is now around 60 or 70 units, that if we could land miniature Versailles on top of that, and connect these buildings by a beautiful greenbelt — (Applause) — that this place where people never wanted to be would become an important destination for folk from all over the country and world.

In some ways, it feels very much like I’m a potter, that we tackle the things that are at our wheel, we try with the skill that we have to think about this next bowl that I want to make. And it went from a bowl to a singular house to a block to a neighborhood to a cultural district to thinking about the city, and at every point, there were things that I didn’t know that I had to learn. I’ve never learned so much about zoning law in my life. I never thought I’d have to. But as a result of that, I’m finding that there’s not just room for my own artistic practice, there’s room for a lot of other artistic practices.

So people started asking us, “Well, Theaster, how are you going to go to scale?” and, “What’s your sustainability plan?” (Laughter) (Applause)

And what I found was that I couldn’t export myself, that what seems necessary in cities like Akron, Ohio, and Detroit, Michigan, and Gary, Indiana, is that there are people in those places who already believe in those places, that are already dying to make those places beautiful, and that often, those people who are passionate about a place are disconnected from the resources necessary to make cool things happen, or disconnected from a contingency of people that could help make things happen. So now, we’re starting to give advice around the country on how to start with what you got, how to start with the things that are in front of you, how to make something out of nothing, how to reshape your world at a wheel or at your block or at the scale of the city.

Thank you so much. (Applause)

[June Cohen]: Thank you. So I think many people watching this will be asking themselves the question you just raised at the end: How can they do this in their own city? You can’t export yourself. Give us a few pages out of your playbook about what someone who is inspired about their city can do to take on projects like yours?

[Gates]: One of the things I’ve found that’s really important is giving thought to not just the kind of individual project, like an old house, but what’s the relationship between an old house, a local school, a small bodega, and is there some kind of synergy between those things? Can you get those folk talking? I’ve found that in cases where neighborhoods have failed, they still often have a pulse. How do you identify the pulse in that place, the passionate people, and then how do you get folk who have been fighting, slogging for 20 years, reenergized about the place that they live? And so someone has to do that work. If I were a

traditional developer, I would be talking about buildings alone, and then putting a “For Lease” sign in the window. I think that you actually have to curate more than that, that there’s a way in which you have to be mindful about, what are the businesses that I want to grow here? And then, are there people who live in this place who want to grow those businesses with me? Because I think it’s not just a cultural space or housing; there has to be the recreation of an economic core. So thinking about those things together feels right.

[Cohen]: It’s hard to get people to create the spark again when people have been slogging for 20 years. Are there any methods you’ve found that have helped break through?

[Gates]: Yeah, I think that now there are lots of examples of folk who are doing amazing work, but those methods are sometimes like, when the media is constantly saying that only violent things happen in a place, then based on your skill set and the particular context, what are the things that you can do in your neighborhood to kind of fight some of that? So I’ve found that if you’re a theater person, you have outdoor street theater festivals. In some cases, we don’t have the resources in certain neighborhoods to do things that are a certain kind of splashy, but if we can then find ways of making sure that people who are local to a place, plus people who could be supportive of the things that are happening locally, when those people get together, I think really amazing things can happen.

[Cohen]: So interesting. And how can you make sure that the projects you’re creating are actually for the disadvantaged and not just for the sort of vegetarian indie movie crowd that might move in to take advantage of them.

[Gates]: Right on. So I think this is where it starts to get into the thick weeds.

[Cohen]: Let’s go there.

[Gates]: Right now, Grand Crossing is 99 percent black, or at least living, and we know that maybe who owns property in a place is different from who walks the streets every day. So it’s reasonable to say that Grand Crossing is already in the process of being something different than it is today. But are there ways to think about housing trusts or land trusts or a mission-based development that starts to protect some of the space that happens, because when you have 7,500 empty lots in a city, you want something to happen there, but you need entities that are not just interested in the development piece, but entities that are interested in the stabilization piece, and I feel like often the developer piece is really motivated, but the other work of a kind of neighborhood consciousness, that part doesn’t live anymore. So how do you start to grow up important watchdogs that ensure that the resources that are made available to new folk that are coming in are also distributed to folk who have lived in a place for a long time.

[Cohen]: That makes so much sense. One more question: You make such a compelling case for beauty and the importance of beauty and the arts. There would be others who would argue that funds would be better spent on basic services for the disadvantaged. How do you combat that viewpoint, or come against it?

[Gates]: I believe that beauty is a basic service. (Applause) Often what I have found is that when there are resources that have not been made available to certain under-resourced cities or neighborhoods or communities, that sometimes culture is the thing that helps to ignite, and that I can’t do everything, but I think that there’s a way in which if you can start with culture and get people kind of reinvested in their place, other kinds of adjacent amenities start to grow, and then people can make a demand that’s a poetic demand, and the political demands that are necessary to wake up our cities, they also become very poetic.

[Cohen]: It makes perfect sense to me. Theaster, thank you so much for being here with us today. Thank you. Theaster Gates. (Applause)

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Transcript for Figure 8.20, Surviving The Echo Mountain Fire

“You know, kind of walk me through you guys’s story.”

“Okay.”

“You know, a little bit.”

“Um, so, Guy and I, Guy saw some flames, and so we called–um, yeah, actually, it was 911, to report this. We called a couple of times because it really seemed like it might be a problem. Then we got a phone call, and luckily it came into my work phone. It did not come in on my personal phone. And so I had my work phone next to me, and if I would not have woken up and heard that, then it would have been a problem. And so we had to get out right away, and I think that happened to other people.”

“My name is Bethany Grace Howe, and I am the executive director of Echo Mountain Fire Relief. Echo Mountain Fire Relief was actually started by a volunteer fireman who was working the fire, also a resident of the Otis area. And, knowing how these things unfolded, he, literally within days of the fire starting, under a week, started a nonprofit. Just sent out the paperwork and got it up and going.”

“We decided to just get a travel trailer. And I got the last spot at KOA. That was–there was nowhere else. Everybody, you know, who even had a travel trailer, maybe somewhere else, but there were no places left.”

Many had lived in manufactured houses and had little or no insurance.

“We’re not getting any insurance money for this. Even those of us who were insured are only getting 5,000 bucks, and that’s, that basically covers your ash and your asbestos. That’s it, nothing else.”

“They made changes to their home and their insurance wasn’t updated, or, other people, were, ‘yeah, I’m fully insured, I have replacement cost insurance, I got it all covered.’ What people don’t realize is, that’s replacement cost on the day of the fire. As everybody knows, everything’s gotten more expensive. So there are people that thought they were fully insured, and they are still coming out with 20 to 30 percent, 40 percent losses, because the cost of everything went through the ceiling.”

“So we had a budget, which means we had to use all of our insurance money to replace our home, and that’s it. So all of the other, my gardening, outbuildings, you know, just everything that we built–my greenhouse, the outdoor kitchen. So these things we can rebuild at some point, but the home is what was most important to us. Getting to spend time in a disaster, not just thinking about ourselves, but looking at what’s happening in our neighborhood, and having more resources coming in, that’s part of our decision. The people who are gonna need it the most will be in that open space with beds and things. We were able to be somewhere more comfortable and not take up space for someone who doesn’t have any other choices.”

“If you were sitting across the table from a survivor, and a lot of our team does that, you know, we’re in Kentucky with tornado survivors and stuff, what would you tell them–let’s say we’re a week past it?”

“I would probably tell them that this is an unimaginable situation, and it is a situation. And wondering about, what do you have within yourself that tells you that you can get through this, or, you know, with lots of support?”

“The vast majority of other people: insured, uninsured, wealthy, not wealthy, renters, homeowners–they all eventually reached a point where it was, ‘for me to get back to my life, I need help.’”

“Toasters, tents, and therapy resources are all things that survivors of the Echo Mountain Complex Fire can find at Salmon River Grange in Otis. While following up on the community’s response after the fire, KOIN6 News found out about the Grange and the support it’s giving. People who lost their homes in the fire can visit the Grange and take whatever they need.”

“–Team helping properties that look like this, look a little more like this.”

“That cleanup put on by the Cascade Relief Team.”

“When leaders of Reach Out Worldwide in Cascade Relief Team learned of the damage, they knew they needed to step in.”

“People don’t wanna wait on, you know, the government to come in and help them out, or the county or city to help them out. That could be a 12-18 month process with FEMA.”

“But what’s happening with this response to the fire is the most important part of looking at preparedness. What went well and what didn’t? And, in my opinion as an employee of the county public health, and someone who survived this, the county was very lacking in response.”

“Where would you say the number one place you felt the lacking was?”

“Um, knowing what to do.”

“I think when the fires hit, Oregon didn’t really have policies, and I don’t think they’d thought about this much. And, you know, I have more insider information on the government than I should, and what I would say is, is that there is a feeling that this state got caught with its pants down, and that we were not ready. And we weren’t, but at the same time, how could we have been?”

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Transcript for Figure 9.8, Why domestic violence victims don’t leave

00:04

I’m here today to talk about a disturbing question, which has an equally disturbing answer. My topic is the secrets of domestic violence, and the question I’m going to tackle is the one question everyone always asks: Why does she stay? Why would anyone stay with a man who beats her? I’m not a psychiatrist, a social worker or an expert in domestic violence. I’m just one woman with a story to tell.

00:35

I was 22. I had just graduated from Harvard College. I had moved to New York City for my first job as a writer and editor at Seventeen magazine. I had my first apartment, my first little green American Express card, and I had a very big secret. My secret was that I had this gun loaded with hollow-point bullets pointed at my head by the man who I thought was my soulmate, many, many times. The man who I loved more than anybody on Earth held a gun to my head and threatened to kill me more times than I can even remember. I’m here to tell you the story of crazy love, a psychological trap disguised as love, one that millions of women and even a few men fall into every year. It may even be your story.

01:31

I don’t look like a typical domestic violence survivor. I have a B.A. in English from Harvard College, an MBA in marketing from Wharton Business School. I’ve spent most of my career working for Fortune 500 companies including Johnson & Johnson, Leo Burnett and The Washington Post. I’ve been married for almost 20 years to my second husband and we have three kids together. My dog is a black lab, and I drive a Honda Odyssey minivan. (Laughter)

02:00

So my first message for you is that domestic violence happens to everyone — all races, all religions, all income and education levels. It’s everywhere. And my second message is that everyone thinks domestic violence happens to women, that it’s a women’s issue. Not exactly. Over 85 percent of abusers are men, and domestic abuse happens only in intimate, interdependent, long-term relationships, in other words, in families, the last place we would want or expect to find violence, which is one reason domestic abuse is so confusing.

02:41

I would have told you myself that I was the last person on Earth who would stay with a man who beats me, but in fact I was a very typical victim because of my age. I was 22, and in the United States, women ages 16 to 24 are three times as likely to be domestic violence victims as women of other ages, and over 500 women and girls this age are killed every year by abusive

partners, boyfriends, and husbands in the United States.

03:14

I was also a very typical victim because I knew nothing about domestic violence, its warning signs or its patterns.

03:22

I met Conor on a cold, rainy January night. He sat next to me on the New York City subway, and he started chatting me up. He told me two things. One was that he, too, had just graduated from an Ivy League school, and that he worked at a very impressive Wall Street bank. But what made the biggest impression on me that first meeting was that he was smart and funny and he looked like a farm boy. He had these big cheeks, these big apple cheeks and this wheat-blond hair, and he seemed so sweet.

03:58

One of the smartest things Conor did, from the very beginning, was to create the illusion that I was the dominant partner in the relationship. He did this especially at the beginning by idolizing me. We started dating, and he loved everything about me, that I was smart, that I'd gone to Harvard, that I was passionate about helping teenage girls, and my job. He wanted to know everything about my family and my childhood and my hopes and dreams. Conor believed in me, as a writer and a woman, in a way that no one else ever had. And he also created a magical atmosphere of trust between us by confessing his secret, which was that, as a very young boy starting at age four, he had been savagely and repeatedly physically abused by his stepfather, and the abuse had gotten so bad that he had had to drop out of school in eighth grade, even though he was very smart, and he'd spent almost 20 years rebuilding his life. Which is why that Ivy League degree and the Wall Street job and his bright shiny future meant so much to him. If you had told me that this smart, funny, sensitive man who adored me would one day dictate whether or not I wore makeup, how short my skirts were, where I lived, what jobs I took, who my friends were and where I spent Christmas, I would have laughed at you, because there was not a hint of violence or control or anger in Conor at the beginning. I didn't know that the first stage in any domestic violence relationship is to seduce and charm the victim.

05:44

I also didn't know that the second step is to isolate the victim. Now, Conor did not come home one day and announce, "You know, hey, all this Romeo and Juliet stuff has been great, but I need to move into the next phase where I isolate you and I abuse you" — (Laughter) — "so I need to get you out of this apartment where the neighbors can hear you scream and out of this city where you have friends and family and coworkers who can see the bruises." Instead, Conor came home one Friday evening and he told me that he had quit his job that day, his dream job, and he said that he had quit his job because of me, because I had made him feel so safe and loved that he didn't need to prove himself on Wall Street anymore, and he just wanted to get out of the city and away from his abusive, dysfunctional family, and move to a tiny town in New England where he could start his life over with me by his side. Now, the last thing I wanted to do was leave New York, and my dream job, but I thought you made sacrifices for your soulmate, so I agreed, and I quit my job, and Conor and I left Manhattan together. I had no idea I was falling into crazy love, that I was walking headfirst into a carefully laid physical, financial and psychological trap.

07:12

The next step in the domestic violence pattern is to introduce the threat of violence and see how she reacts. And here's where those guns come in. As soon as we moved to New England — you know, that place where Connor was supposed to feel so safe — he bought three guns. He kept one in the glove compartment of our car. He kept one under the pillows on our bed, and the third one he kept in his pocket at all times. And he said that he needed those guns because of the trauma he'd experienced as a young boy. He needed them to feel protected. But those guns were really a message for me, and even though he hadn't raised a hand to me, my life was already in grave danger every minute of every day.

08:00

Conor first physically attacked me five days before our wedding. It was 7 a.m. I still had on my nightgown. I was working on my computer trying to finish a freelance writing assignment, and I got frustrated, and Conor used my anger as an excuse to put both of his hands around my neck and to squeeze so tightly that I could not breathe or scream, and he used the chokehold to hit my head repeatedly against the wall. Five days later, the ten bruises on my neck had just faded, and I put on my mother's wedding dress, and I married him.

08:43

Despite what had happened, I was sure we were going to live happily ever after, because I loved him, and he loved me so much. And he was very, very sorry. He had just been really stressed out by the wedding and by becoming a family with me. It was an isolated incident, and he was never going to hurt me again.

09:07

It happened twice more on the honeymoon. The first time, I was driving to find a secret beach and I got lost, and he punched me in the side of my head so hard that the other side of my head repeatedly hit the driver's side window. And then a few days later, driving home from our honeymoon, he got frustrated by traffic, and he threw a cold Big Mac in my face. Conor proceeded to beat me once or twice a week for the next two and a half years of our marriage.

09:38

I was mistaken in thinking that I was unique and alone in this situation. One in three American women experiences domestic violence or stalking at some point in her life, and the CDC reports that 15 million children are abused every year, 15 million. So actually, I was in very good company.

10:02

Back to my question: Why did I stay? The answer is easy. I didn't know he was abusing me. Even though he held those loaded guns to my head, pushed me down stairs, threatened to kill our dog, pulled the key out of the car ignition as I drove down the highway, poured coffee grinds on my head as I dressed for a job interview, I never once thought of myself as a battered wife. Instead, I was a very strong woman in love with a deeply troubled man, and I was the only person on Earth who could help Conor face his demons.

10:44

The other question everybody asks is, why doesn't she just leave? Why didn't I walk out? I could have left any time. To me, this is the saddest and most painful question that people ask, because we victims know something you usually don't: It's incredibly dangerous to leave an abuser. Because the final step in the domestic violence pattern is kill her. Over 70 percent of domestic violence murders happen after the victim has ended the relationship, after she's gotten out, because then the abuser has nothing left to lose. Other outcomes include long-term stalking, even after the abuser remarries; denial of financial resources; and manipulation of the family court system to terrify the victim and her children, who are regularly forced by family court judges to spend unsupervised time with the man who beat their mother. And still we ask, why doesn't she just leave?

11:52

I was able to leave, because of one final, sadistic beating that broke through my denial. I realized that the man who I loved so much was going to kill me if I let him. So I broke the silence. I told everyone: the police, my neighbors, my friends and family, total strangers, and I'm here today because you all helped me.

12:26

We tend to stereotype victims as grisly headlines, self-destructive women, damaged goods. The question, "Why does she stay?" is code for some people for, "It's her fault for staying," as if victims intentionally choose to fall in love with men intent upon destroying us.

12:49

But since publishing "Crazy Love," I have heard hundreds of stories from men and women who also got out, who learned an invaluable life lesson from what happened, and who rebuilt lives — joyous, happy lives — as employees, wives and mothers, lives completely free of violence, like me. Because it turns out that I'm actually a very typical domestic violence victim and a typical domestic violence survivor. I remarried a kind and gentle man, and we have those three kids. I have that black lab, and I have that minivan. What I will never have again, ever, is a loaded gun held to my head by someone who says that he loves me.

13:43

Right now, maybe you're thinking, "Wow, this is fascinating," or, "Wow, how stupid was she," but this whole time, I've actually been talking about you. I promise you there are several people listening to me right now who are currently being abused or who were abused as children or who are abusers themselves. Abuse could be affecting your daughter, your sister, your best friend right now.

14:18

I was able to end my own crazy love story by breaking the silence. I'm still breaking the silence today. It's my way of helping other victims, and it's my final request of you. Talk about what you heard here. Abuse thrives only in silence. You have the power to end domestic violence simply by shining a spotlight on it. We victims need everyone. We need every one of you to understand the secrets of domestic violence. Show abuse the light of day by talking about it with your children, your coworkers, your friends and family. Recast survivors as wonderful, lovable people with full futures. Recognize the early signs of violence and conscientiously intervene, deescalate it, show victims a safe way out. Together we can make our beds, our dinner tables and our families the safe and peaceful oases they should be.

15:32

Thank you.

15:34

(Applause)

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Transcript for Figure 9.9, How Childhood Trauma Affects Health across a Lifetime

In the mid-'90s, the CDC and Kaiser Permanente discovered an exposure that dramatically increased the risk for seven out of 10 of the leading causes of death in the United States. In high doses, it affects brain development, the immune system, hormonal systems, and even the way our DNA is read and transcribed. Folks who are exposed in very high doses have triple the lifetime risk of heart disease and lung cancer and a 20-year difference in life expectancy. And yet, doctors today are not trained in routine screening or treatment. Now, the exposure I'm talking about is not a pesticide or a packaging chemical. It's childhood trauma.

Okay. What kind of trauma am I talking about here? I'm not talking about failing a test or losing a basketball game. I am talking about threats that are so severe or pervasive that they literally get under our skin and change our physiology: things like abuse or neglect, or growing up with a parent who struggles with mental illness or substance dependence.

Now, for a long time, I viewed these things in the way I was trained to view them, either as a social problem — refer to social services — or as a mental health problem — refer to mental health services. And then something happened to make me rethink my entire approach. When I finished my residency, I wanted to go someplace where I felt really needed, someplace where I could make a difference. So I came to work for California Pacific Medical Center, one of the best private hospitals in Northern California, and together, we opened a clinic in Bayview-Hunters Point, one of the poorest, most underserved neighborhoods in San Francisco. Now, prior to that point, there had been only one pediatrician in all of Bayview to serve more than 10,000 children, so we hung a shingle, and we were able to provide top-quality care regardless of ability to pay. It was so cool. We targeted the typical health disparities: access to care, immunization rates, asthma hospitalization rates, and we hit all of our numbers. We felt very proud of ourselves.

But then I started noticing a disturbing trend. A lot of kids were being referred to me for ADHD, or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, but when I actually did a thorough history and physical, what I found was that for most of my patients, I couldn't make a diagnosis of ADHD. Most of the kids I was seeing had experienced such severe trauma that it felt like something else was going on. Somehow I was missing something important.

Now, before I did my residency, I did a master's degree in public health, and one of the things that they teach you in public health school is that if you're a doctor and you see 100 kids that all drink from the same well, and 98 of them develop diarrhea, you can go ahead and write that prescription for dose after dose after dose of antibiotics, or you can walk over and say, "What the hell is in this well?" So I began reading everything that I could get my hands on about how exposure to adversity affects the developing

brains and bodies of children.

And then one day, my colleague walked into my office, and he said, “Dr. Burke, have you seen this?” In his hand was a copy of a research study called the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study. That day changed my clinical practice and ultimately my career.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study is something that everybody needs to know about. It was done by Dr. Vince Felitti at Kaiser and Dr. Bob Anda at the CDC, and together, they asked 17,500 adults about their history of exposure to what they called “adverse childhood experiences,” or ACEs. Those include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; physical or emotional neglect; parental mental illness, substance dependence, incarceration; parental separation or divorce; or domestic violence. For every yes, you would get a point on your ACE score. And then what they did was they correlated these ACE scores against health outcomes. What they found was striking. Two things: Number one, ACEs are incredibly common. Sixty-seven percent of the population had at least one ACE, and 12.6 percent, one in eight, had four or more ACEs. The second thing that they found was that there was a dose-response relationship between ACEs and health outcomes: the higher your ACE score, the worse your health outcomes. For a person with an ACE score of four or more, their relative risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease was two and a half times that of someone with an ACE score of zero. For hepatitis, it was also two and a half times. For depression, it was four and a half times. For suicidality, it was 12 times. A person with an ACE score of seven or more had triple the lifetime risk of lung cancer and three and a half times the risk of ischemic heart disease, the number one killer in the United States of America.

Well, of course this makes sense. Some people looked at this data and they said, “Come on. You have a rough childhood, you’re more likely to drink and smoke and do all these things that are going to ruin your health. This isn’t science. This is just bad behavior.”

It turns out this is exactly where the science comes in. We now understand better than we ever have before how exposure to early adversity affects the developing brains and bodies of children. It affects areas like the nucleus accumbens, the pleasure and reward center of the brain that is implicated in substance dependence. It inhibits the prefrontal cortex, which is necessary for impulse control and executive function, a critical area for learning. And on MRI scans, we see measurable differences in the amygdala, the brain’s fear response center. So there are real neurologic reasons why folks exposed to high doses of adversity are more likely to engage in high-risk behavior, and that’s important to know.

But it turns out that even if you don’t engage in any high-risk behavior, you’re still more likely to develop heart disease or cancer. The reason for this has to do with the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis, the brain’s and body’s stress response system that governs our fight-or-flight response. How does it work? Well, imagine you’re walking in the forest and you see a bear. Immediately, your hypothalamus sends a signal to your pituitary, which sends a signal to your adrenal gland that says, “Release stress hormones! Adrenaline! Cortisol!” And so your heart starts to pound, Your pupils dilate, your airways open up, and you are ready to either fight that bear or run from the bear. And that is wonderful if you’re in a forest and there’s a bear. (Laughter) But the problem is what happens when the bear comes home every night, and this system is activated over and over and over again, and it goes from being adaptive, or life-saving, to maladaptive, or health-damaging. Children are especially sensitive to this repeated stress activation, because their brains and bodies are just developing. High doses of adversity not only affect brain structure and function, they affect the developing immune system, developing hormonal systems, and even the way our DNA is read and transcribed.

So for me, this information threw my old training out the window, because when we understand the mechanism of a disease, when we know not only which pathways are disrupted, but how, then as doctors, it is our job to use this science for prevention and treatment. That’s what we do.

So in San Francisco, we created the Center for Youth Wellness to prevent, screen and heal the impacts of ACEs and toxic stress. We started simply with routine screening of every one of our kids at their regular physical, because I know that if my patient has an ACE score of 4, she’s two and a half times as likely to develop hepatitis or COPD, she’s four and half times as likely to become depressed, and she’s 12 times as likely to attempt to take her own life as my patient with zero ACEs. I know that when she’s in my exam room. For our patients who do screen positive, we have a multidisciplinary treatment team that works to reduce the dose of adversity and treat symptoms using best practices, including home visits, care coordination, mental health care, nutrition, holistic interventions, and yes, medication when necessary. But we also educate parents about the impacts of ACEs and toxic stress the same way you would for covering electrical outlets, or lead poisoning, and we tailor the care of our asthmatics and our diabetics in a way that recognizes that they may need more aggressive treatment, given the changes to their hormonal and immune systems.

So the other thing that happens when you understand this science is that you want to shout it from the rooftops, because this isn’t just an issue for kids in Bayview. I figured the minute that everybody else heard about this, it would be routine screening, multi-disciplinary treatment teams, and it would be a race to the most effective clinical treatment protocols. Yeah. That did not happen. And that was a huge learning for me. What I had thought of as simply best clinical practice I now understand to be a

movement. In the words of Dr. Robert Block, the former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, “Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today.” And for a lot of people, that’s a terrifying prospect. The scope and scale of the problem seems so large that it feels overwhelming to think about how we might approach it. But for me, that’s actually where the hopes lies, because when we have the right framework, when we recognize this to be a public health crisis, then we can begin to use the right tool kit to come up with solutions. From tobacco to lead poisoning to HIV/AIDS, the United States actually has quite a strong track record with addressing public health problems, but replicating those successes with ACEs and toxic stress is going to take determination and commitment, and when I look at what our nation’s response has been so far, I wonder, why haven’t we taken this more seriously?

You know, at first I thought that we marginalized the issue because it doesn’t apply to us. That’s an issue for those kids in those neighborhoods. Which is weird, because the data doesn’t bear that out. The original ACEs study was done in a population that was 70 percent Caucasian, 70 percent college-educated. But then, the more I talked to folks, I’m beginning to think that maybe I had it completely backwards. If I were to ask how many people in this room grew up with a family member who suffered from mental illness, I bet a few hands would go up. And then if I were to ask how many folks had a parent who maybe drank too much, or who really believed that if you spare the rod, you spoil the child, I bet a few more hands would go up. Even in this room, this is an issue that touches many of us, and I am beginning to believe that we marginalize the issue because it does apply to us. Maybe it’s easier to see in other zip codes because we don’t want to look at it. We’d rather be sick.

Fortunately, scientific advances and, frankly, economic realities make that option less viable every day. The science is clear: Early adversity dramatically affects health across a lifetime. Today, we are beginning to understand how to interrupt the progression from early adversity to disease and early death, and 30 years from now, the child who has a high ACE score and whose behavioral symptoms go unrecognized, whose asthma management is not connected, and who goes on to develop high blood pressure and early heart disease or cancer will be just as anomalous as a six-month mortality from HIV/AIDS. People will look at that situation and say, “What the heck happened there?” This is treatable. This is beatable. The single most important thing that we need today is the courage to look this problem in the face and say, this is real and this is all of us. I believe that we are the movement.

Thank you. (Applause)

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Transcript for Figure 10.15, A Brief History of Environmental Justice

Nationally, the facilities where we dump our garbage and process dangerous chemicals tend to be located in poor and minority communities. The people who live there have little or no protection from the industries around them. And things could get worse.

So, there’s this idea of environmental justice. It’s pretty simple: Communities shouldn’t be forced to deal with more pollution because they belong to a certain race, national origin, or income bracket. Yet, America has struggled over the years to implement any serious policy that actually protects these communities. So, let’s lay out the ways the government has failed them.

“The fight for environmental justice took off in 1982 when residents of Warren County, North Carolina mounted mass demonstrations against a plan to dump contaminated soil in a landfill in their community.”

“The EPA investigated four similar landfills in southern states and found that they were all located in black or low-income neighborhoods. In 1987, the United Church of Christ Racial Justice Commission found that around the country, hazardous waste facilities were more likely to be located in mostly minority communities.”

“Amid mounting proof, the federal government was forced to act. So, in 1992 President George H.W. Bush founded the Office of Environmental Justice inside the EPA. Two years later, President Bill Clinton signed an executive order requiring federal agencies to consider environmental justice in all of their policies, as well as extending civil rights protection to environmental discrimination.”

“But Congress never passed a bill to make Clinton’s executive order law. Then came George W. Bush. His administration shifted

the focus of the Office of Environmental Justice from protecting low-income and minority communities to 'all people,' leaving vulnerable populations without a federal environmental advocate."

"Under Bush, many environmental civil rights claims were rejected or delayed for years. In 2009, after President Barack Obama's election, his administration recommitted to environmental justice."

"Generally speaking, in this country, a lot of environmentally problematic facilities tend to be located in places where poor folks live. Yet, during the two years Democrats controlled the House, the Senate, and the White House, they didn't file a single bill focused on strengthening environmental justice protections."

"Passing major environmental legislation faded further when Republicans took control of Congress in the 2010 midterm elections. Now, President Donald J. Trump is making good on his vow to weaken the EPA."

"This budget–a 31% cut to the EPA, $2.6 billion cut away from the EPA, that's what the president wants. As the EPA loses funding and regulations are rolled back, vulnerable communities may very likely fall through the cracks."

"I'm Talia Buford. I'll be covering these communities and digging into systemic environmental injustice. If you have something to tell me, email me at Talia.Buford@ProPublica.org."

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Transcript for Figure 10.17, How Black Americans Were Robbed of Their Land

[Willena Scott-White]: My dad's land was taken, and that's how I see it.

[Vann R. Newkirk II, writer for The Atlantic]: Over the course of the entire 20th century, we know that black farmers have lost about 12 million acres of land total.

[Isaac Daniel Scott, Sr.]: We are just being forced out. They're trying to force us out.

[Newkirk]: These cases of dispossession can only be called theft.

[Scott-White]: Mound Bayou is a historic all-black town. Formed many years ago in the 1800s by two former slaves. We don't have the overt racism that we used to have against people out in the public. Now we deal with it with employment, economics, banks. We still deal with it and until we overcome all of that The Delta will forever struggle, is my belief.

[Isaac Daniel Scott, Sr. directs the loading of pipe]

[Scott-White]: I've been doing this all of my life. As a kid, we went to the field until it was dark. Either cotton chopping or cotton picking.

[Newkirk]: The Mississippi Delta is this area between these rivers in the northwest of Mississippi that has some of the most fertile land in the United States, in the continent really. If you go out there, you will see rows and rows of cotton, of soybeans, every single type of crop you can imagine.

But in the early 20th century, almost all the land was owned by white folks. It was homesteaded out by the federal government but was otherwise inaccessible to black folks.

[Scott-White]: My grandpapa, Ed Scott Sr., started purchasing land back in 1938. They came from Hale County, Alabama and they moved to Mississippi in 1919 before my dad was born. My grandmama hated it here, but in Alabama, black people could only sharecrop, no one would sell them land. Very few could get that historic 40 acres and a mule.

[Newkirk]: Ed Scott Sr. was almost supernaturally gifted at farming. He knows exactly how to rotate the crops, how to plant things in a way that gets the highest yield. And that gave him his own economic gravity that local white businessmen could not ignore. Eventually a plantation owner decides to sell Ed Scott Sr. a plot of land.

[Scott-White]: When he passed in 1957, the family had acquired acres and acres of land.

[Newkirk]: Ed Scott's son, Ed Scott Jr., takes over the farm. He is part of the generation of men that goes off to war during World War II. And when this generation of black men comes back, their white peers are granted so many free things from the GI bill. They get free education. Lots of them get free homes. They get things they can pass onto their children. But the black men among that number are denied many of those opportunities.

[Scott-White]: My dad went to World War II and when he came back, his dad wanted him to go and finish school. But farming was in his blood.

[Ed Scott Jr.]: You had to know what you were doing to make a living here. My daddy used to bale hay and sell chicken and turkey. He used to take turkey to Greenwood down there to white people, and sell them.

[Isaac Daniel Scott Sr.]: My dad was the smartest one of his siblings and the hardest worker of his siblings. Every now and then he would say "God ain't going to make no more land, so you better hold what you got."

[Newkirk]: When Ed Scott Jr. takes over the farm, he's operating it through one of the most turbulent times in American history. In 1953, the first bus boycotts. 1954, Brown v. Board. 1955, Emmett Till is lynched.

[Ed Scott Jr.]: You know, I left here and went to Selma, Alabama when they had that march from Selma to Montgomery. It was rough back there then. But you had to have some guts to stand up and just be rough with them.

[Scott-White]: When he owned his land, he actually had 57 families who lived on his land and worked with him. And it was like a community. Whatever we needed was on our farm. We would put up peaches, we would put up peas and butter beans. And everybody got their share to carry them across the winter. It was like a utopia.

[Newkirk]: Modern farming requires debt in order to grow your crops and in order to collect a harvest. Over the last hundred years, the federal government has become more and more of a player in providing the credit to those farmers. Much of the administration of this federal money was done by locally elected committees. And what do we know about voting in the south at that time? We know black people could not vote. The people who ended up controlling all that were the great grandchildren of the plantation owners, and why would they ever give a black farmer money to start his own farm? And so, between 1950 and 1969, black farmers lose something on the order of 6 million acres of land across the country. But the Scotts were able to hold on to most of their land until the farm crisis of the 1970s and 1980s.

[News anchor]: Rising fuel costs, increasing cost of production, new taxes: these changes will have a significant impact on the well-being of family farmers. Federal legislators are slashing farm programs to pay for the deficit.

[Newkirk]: As farming in America collapses in the 70s and 80s, there's a lifeline in the Mississippi Delta: Catfish. The federal government, they pour a whole bunch of federal money into taking these poor white farmers who are struggling, and getting them into catfish. The people who are left out of that are the black farmers.

Ed Scott Jr sees what's happening. He sees catfish as a way out. He converts most of his farms into eight giant catfish ponds with no help from the federal government. He digs them himself. He builds the very first catfish plant owned and operated by an African American in the United States. And it becomes this inspirational story across the south of a black person who has literally beat all the odds to create something new.

[Scott-White]: My dad loved clothes and he loved to dress. Even on a daily basis he wore what we call khaki suits which would have been a khaki shirt with matching pants. And they had to be starched and ironed. He always had a nice new car but he kept it closed up in a shed so no one would know he had it. He did not commingle. Meaning, what white people would call "staying in your place." Wasn't no blacks supposed to have a car.

[Newkirk]: There's gonna come a time when they think you're uppity. And that's exactly what happened to the Scotts.

[Isaac Daniel Scott Sr.]: It wasn't just because we were black, it's because we were doing so well. We were doing so well.

[Scott-White]: Blacks were never successful at getting enough money to farm with from USDA. So when they went in to get the

money for the crop, they gave them half of what they need. Which was the way of keeping blacks from being successful. Because if you're going to grow beans and you say, "I need this much for fertilizer, I need this much for crop protection, I need this much for seeds and I need this much for watering," and you only get half of that, there's no way for you to produce a good crop.

[Ed Scott Jr.]: It ain't easy trying to buy no land in Mississippi. You'll never own no land in Mississippi. The white people ain't gonna let you own no land in Mississippi. That's what the county agent's going to tell you.

[Newkirk]: It's documented. They did not offer him the same loan terms. They regularly offered him much smaller loans than they did white farmers in the area.

[Scott-White]: The county agent, he refused to give him a loan. So he could not feed his fish, could not water his crops. They foreclosed on his land.

[Newkirk]: At its peak, the Scotts' farm spanned across 1000 acres. Now it was down to just 300.

[Farmers protesting.]

[Newkirk]: In 1997, thousands of black farmers sued the USDA for discrimination. What's known as the black farmer's lawsuit is actually called Pigford v. Glickman. One of the largest class action lawsuits filed on behalf of black farmers against the USDA and the federal government.

[John Boyd Jr., President, National Black Farmers Association]: There is a wide disparity in the way the department of agriculture treats black farmers versus white farmers.

[Philip Hainey, Vice President, National Black Farmers Association]: Because of the practices, the discriminatory practices of the USDA, I was put out of business. My family was destroyed, and basically they just destroyed my life.

[Newkirk]: The Scotts become one of the marquee families in this lawsuit.

[Scott-White]: OK, this is just where we were working on the lawsuit, and I had to go back and show where my daddy had taken out promissory notes with USDA as the backer. I tried to keep everything I could.

[Anderson Cooper, news announcer]: Now the government, the U.S. Department of Agriculture in this case, admits they discriminated against black farmers, unfairly denying them federal loans for instance.

[Speaker on news segment]: I'm very pleased the judge approved the settlement so we can begin to process these cases and black farmers can begin to receive their long overdue settlements.

[Newkirk]: The federal government paid out just north of $2 billion and upwards of 70,000 successful claims were made by black farmers in the south.

The Scotts received one of the largest settlements out of this lawsuit because, unlike lots of people, they had the documents to show exactly the ways in which the federal government discriminated against them. Most farmers were lucky to get $20,000.

[Scott-White]: I'll give you an exact figure later but it was a little over 7 million dollars. He was blind but we made sure that he signed the documents to buy his land back. And he presented the check to the same man who was instrumental in taking this land. He was still in office.

[Newkirk]: It took the Scott family nearly 30 years, the space of a generation, to buy their land back. Land Hunger, as W.E.B. Dubois describes it, is this almost mystical drive to seek and to own something in this United States among people who were once property themselves.

If you look at the Scotts, you look at what the land meant to them. It wasn't just money. It was destiny, it was something to hold onto. It was a purpose and something that held their family together through generations.

[Scott-White]: It grieves me that we were denied a history and that's how I see it. And I'm going to try not to cry. It's dear to me that my children know what my ancestors went through for us to be where we are and who we are. And for my dad, having the land and keeping the land, that was his dream. That was the heritage. The land was a heritage.

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Transcript for Figure 10.19, Sustainable Farming – TechKnow

[Kyle Hill]: At first glance this might look like your typical dairy farm in the heartland of America.

[Gary Corbett, CEO, Fair Oaks Farm]: We probably have 32,000 acres that we own. We milk on 11 sites, we have 11 parlors and we're milking right now probably a little over 36,000 cows.

[Hill]: But what makes this Indiana farm unique isn't what you see, it's what you smell.

These cows are full of it and it's not just milk. So you don't just have all these cows here for producing milk.

[Mark Stoermann, Fair Oaks Farm]: It's actually a really great story. We take two products, milk and manure. They are both separated from the cow. The manure in the barns, the milk in the milking parlor. They come together as renewable natural gas on a tanker truck that then is able to deliver that milk all over the upper Midwest.

[Hill]: What you see behind me is Fair Oaks Farm's $19 million investment in sustainability. Each year they produce over 2 million gallons of clean natural gas fuel. To put this into perspective, that's enough to fully fuel 35 747s. It's even enough to fuel a whole fleet of Fair Oak Farms milk trucks, which they do every day on the farm.

This new future of green energy lies in this innovation: A highly efficient anaerobic digester which converts the manure into compressed natural gas.

[Mark]: We produce about 500,000 gallons of liquid manure from the areas that go into the central digester.

[Hill]: How do you deal with all the manure they're producing constantly every day?

[Mark]: We use a vacuum tanker, so every time the cows go in to be milked – three times a day – we vacuum all the manure out of the aisles, collect it and take it to the digester. And that's where the technology for cleaning the gas comes in.

[Hill]: Manure is poured into the digester and heated. Microbes break it down, creating a biogas that is captured and piped as renewable natural gas. The leftover liquid is used as fertilizer.

[Corbett]: We're taking something that potentially could be a contaminant to the environment, totally taking that out of the picture. We are taking cow manure and making rocket science. And we feel pretty good about that.

[Hill]: So what have we got here?

[Corbett]: We got the future. The future's laying right in front of you. This is a little heifer calf that was born in the last 45 minutes. And that's what it's about.

[Hill]: How many of these little guys are born every day?

[Corbett]: Right now with our new barn open, probably about 140 to 150.

[Hill]: This isn't just the cycle of life. This is the start of the cycle you've got going on here. The crops from the manure, which makes the milk, which makes the methane and into the crops to feed the little guy like this one.

[Corbett]: It is a perfect circle with virtually no waste.

[Hill]: Right here is the start of the whole process.

[Mark]: This is the start of the process. The feed, the farms, that's the start of the process.

[Hill]: Mark gave me an up-close look at the amazing technology which makes it all possible.

[Mark]: Basically now we are standing on top of the 6.2-million-gallon digester.

[Hill]: So this whole thing is basically like a giant cow gut.

[Mark]: The same bacteria, the same enzymes that are in her gut breaking down organic material and producing gas do so in the tank except this time we capture it instead of her belching it.

[Hill]: And then what comes out, you reuse. It's also part of your sustainability, right?

[Mark]: Yes, actually, all the nutrients stay in the liquid. That gets returned to the land like we've always used it for fertilizer in the dairy industry.

[Mark Maloney, AMP Americas]: I see a lot of farms having the ability to replicate this model and turn their byproducts into real energy, and help save the planet.

[Hill]: Does it feel any different than any other diesel engine?

[Truck driver]: No. It's obviously cleaner, I see no difference as far as pulling loads or anything like that.

[Hill]: Can you show me?

[Driver]: Sure.

[Music.]

[Hill]: In the face of climate change nearly every major industry is going to have to adapt and evolve. It's inspiring to see sustainability on such a large scale right here in the heartland of America.

[Corbett]: Sustainability has always been a part of our farming operations. We just keep taking it to different levels. Because to survive in the 21st century you're going to need sustainability, creativity, technology, innovation to get us there.

[Hill]:You guys want some ice cream?

[Children]: Yes.

[Hill]: And this grass to glass thinking has made this farm, and its ice cream, famous.

What flavors do you want?

[Children]: Strawberry.

[Hill]: Have you guys seen any cows on the farm?

[Children]: Yes.

[Hill]: What were they doing?

[Children]: Pooping.

[Hill]: I've been seeing cows poop on this farm all day today!

[Child]: This is better.

[Hill]: This is better than any ice cream you've ever had?

[Child]: Uh-huh.

[Hill]: Is this kind of one of your proudest achievements in farming? You've been farming for years and years. Is this something that you really just take pride in?

[Corbett]: Oh yeah, how can you not? The opportunity one, just to interact with people like we are to create this edutainment center if you will, the things we're doing with the environment, the things we're doing with our animals... this is just a nirvana for anything that's involved in farming and agriculture, it's terrific.

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Transcript for Figure 10.20, Vertical Farming – TechKnow

[Kosta Grammatis]: For over 8,000 years, we've been plowing dirt to grow our food. In fact, we've got so good at it that over 80% of the world's farmable land is already in use. By 2050, we can expect another 3 billion people on planet Earth to join us for dinner, another China and India. On average, in the United States, produce travels 1500 miles from farm to plate, losing valuable taste and nutrients along the way. So how can we continue to grow food to feed the hungry masses? One answer is vertical farming.

Summerland, California, known for its eclectic shops and restaurants, has another new addition to its main street, a thriving vertical farm.

[Alex Thompson]: I'm Alex Thompson, owner and operator, Montecito Urban Farms.

[Grammatis]: Alex set up 60 tower gardens in a former parking lot that today produce a wide variety of crops. From seedlings to harvested vegetables, his farm delivers fresh vegetables to seven local restaurants every day.

[Grammatis]: This is a tower garden. Can you tell us how it works?

[Thompson]: It is a vertical aeroponic system. There is a simple fountain pump at the bottom that pumps the water to the top where there's a shower cap. The water is essentially misting and raining down through the center column and getting all the root systems. It would be easier if I show you. How about if I pull this out? Look at how healthy and strong these root systems are. And the water every 15 minutes is just washing over these roots.

[Grammatis]: Is it ready to be harvested?

[Thompson]: Yeah, this is ready to be either fully harvested for a restaurant or you could start harvesting it and eating it.

[Grammatis]: Delicious.

[Thompson]: We have one restaurant here that's garden to mouth in 50 feet.

[Grammatis]: I want to check this out.

We are here in Cafe Luna. What kind of different produce do you buy?

[Cafe Luna owner]: We buy kale, arugula, chives.

[Grammatis]: Did you get more customers when you made the switch?

[Cafe Luna owner]: Absolutely, yes.

[Grammatis]: What are your customers saying?

[Cafe Luna owner]: They say that things really pop, they taste just fabulous.

[Grammatis]: I heard you have a really good smoothie. I'd love to try it.

[Cafe Luna owner]: We do, it's made with kale that is from directly next door.

[Grammatis]: Tell me how it works. How do you do this?

[Cafe Luna smoothie maker]: We're going to start with the almond milk, tear off some kale, same amount of spinach, an entire banana, protein powder. That is health in a glass.

[Grammatis]: Delicious.

[Travels to O'Hare.]

[Grammatis]: I just landed here in O'Hare International Airport and I'm starving. There is a rumor that there's a vertical garden that serves 10,000 people every year. Let's go find it.

It's like a secret garden in the middle of an airport. Totally amazing.

How many towers do we have growing here?

[Vertical Gardener]: We have 26 towers in this garden and each tower has 44 plants. So we're growing lots and lots of different herbs, you can see we've got basil, we've got cilantro, and then we have lots of sage over here. We're providing locally grown produce for restaurants that operate at the airport.

[Grammatis]: We just picked some fresh produce and now we are going to go to Wicker Park and make some sushi.

[Grammatis]: I'm Kosta Grammatis.

[Brad Maher, director of food and beverage, HMS Host]: Hi, Kosta, I'm Brad. Nice to meet you.

[Grammatis]: Nice to meet you. I picked some stuff upstairs, can we make something with it?

[Maher]: What we'll do in the morning is we'll go through the garden and select what needs to be harvested for the day.

[Grammatis]: Do people notice the taste? Does it taste different?

[Maher]: Absolutely. This roll is produced with some of the chives and lettuces that we harvested from the garden earlier. Like it?

[Grammatis]: Mmm. Super fresh, so good.

[Maher]: Go ahead and help yourself. I know you're hungry.

[Grammatis]: I'm going to eat it all.

[Walks to preschool facility in Santa Barbara, California.]

[Grammatis]: Tower Gardens are so new, it's hard to determine what kind of impact it can have on a nationwide scale, when it comes to feeding our country. But here at this preschool, kids have been eating from tower gardens for the last few months.

[Kids singing]: I like to eat, eat, eat kale from our garden.

[Cheri Diaz, Director of Hope 4 Kids Preschool]: Hope 4 Kids Preschool is the first preschool ever to have a commercial tower garden farm.

[Teacher]: Do you know what these are?

[Children]: Tower gardens.

[Grammatis]: I want to know what everyone's favorite vegetable is?

[Child 1]: Mine is lettuce.

[Child 2]: Carrots.

[Child 3]: Tomatoes.

[Teacher]: Yours is tomatoes. Gracie, what do you want to pick? Arugula? Let's pick some right here.

[Hildy Medina, Gracie's mom]: One day we're at the supermarket and this was after the tower gardens appeared. She grabbed a sugar pea and started eating it and I thought wow, I can't believe she's doing this.

[Teacher]: Did you eat snap peas off our tower garden?

[Gracie Crill, preschooler]: No.

[Teacher]: You didn't eat the snap peas off the tower garden?

[Gracie]: No, we ate them all.

[Diaz]: They'll ask if they can have some kale, or some lettuce, or some cilantro, and the teacher will go up and they'll say sure, I'd love to. They'll help them pull it off and they go wash it, and off they go, running to the sandbox with a piece of kale sticking out of their mouth.

[Grammatis]: What's your favorite?

[Child]: Arugula!

[Child]: Eating the aphids.

[Teacher]: It's eating the aphids!

[Grammatis]: Aphids!

[Grammatis]: What do you think the global impact would be if every kid had access to this at school?

[Diaz]: I believe it would seriously shut down fast food as we know it. People would learn the value of eating healthy.

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Transcript for Figure 12.14, Shame and Prejudice: Artist Kent Monkman's Story of Resilience

[Kent Monkman]: What is the function of art and what is the purpose of art? Is it only just to show beauty or pleasure? I don't believe so. I believe that art has to be challenging and it has to take us sometimes to dark places or to challenging places. I felt like at this moment in time it was important to have a critical perspective on Canada.

[Music]

Was it meant for indigenous people over these last hundred fifty years? What does colonization mean? And this exhibition reflects on the intergenerational trauma of these cycles of abuse, effects of colonialism in our communities.

I grew up in Winnipeg, I lived near my Cree relatives, my grandmother had been a student at residential school. At the time, you know, growing up I didn't really know much about what had happened to her, she didn't really talk about it. I realized that many of the things that happened to her had an impact on our family.

In the Urban Red series, there's quite a bit of tension between the predator and prey, the idea that indigenous women are preyed upon. There's a theme that runs through that body of work that reflects on missing and murdered indigenous women, and that ties back to the violence against the female nude. So I'm using the Cubist kind of violent depiction of the female nude to talk about that violence.

But I'm also in those paintings establishing a kind of tension between mythology, so indigenous spirituality and mythology in an urban environment, you know, and the tension or conflict between Christian beliefs and the tension between the colonial policies that have been institutionalized indigenous people in many ways, whether it's incarcerating indigenous people or the beginning of the reserve system, residential schools, and so forth. So those themes run throughout various chapters in this exhibition.

[Music]

Canada is going to be celebrated this year for being 150 years old, but I think it's important for Canadians to acknowledge the experience of indigenous people. That's how we get reconciliation. It means that every Canadian should understand and should learn something more about the indigenous experience because our foundational myths are flawed unless they incorporate these experiences into them, into our national mythology.

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Transcript for Figure 12.19, Rosie Perez on Roles for Women of Color

Women of color, if you're over 40 and you get fat, you will work. But if you're hot and over 40 and a woman of color, they don't know what to do with you.

Tell me what woman of color, whether she be Asian, black, Latin, Native American – ooh, they get the worst of it, right? – that is hot, got body going on, the hair's still sparkling, how many leads do you see them have?

You have this big, fat, blubbery male actor having a love scene with like a 20-year-old and you're like, for real? For real? But are you going to do that for us, too? It doesn't happen. Put on the weight, welcome to Big Mama's House. [Laughs.]

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Transcript for Figure 12.20, Does Ethnicity Prevent Actors From Booking Work?

So do you feel that your ethnicity prevents you from certain roles?

[Bea Reyes]: Sometimes. Because I mean, like, there's a lot of people that are saying like, "Oh, Asians are getting more in." But then you have to remember, there's such a big wide range of Asians. You have Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Filipino, that's a lot. But I mean, like, you can't just put it to one. There's so, so many different types. But I mean, like, I hope like I have it in just because a lot of Filipinos do look Mexican and sometimes they do look for that Mexican role. So I mean, like, I think I probably have a better chance than, I mean, Filipinos have a better chance than other Asians. But at the same time, you have to weigh it out because they also want Chinese, you know? I mean, they always want the Chinese triad family role too. So I think having this ethnicity that I have is a bit difficult to get in like acting and everything.

[West Liang]: But just as an example, I've had meetings with agents or have had managers tell me that agents won't see me because they already have an Asian guy. You know, that's just one example where you're allowed to have all kinds of different white women and white men, but you're allowed to have one Asian girl and one Asian guy. You know? And my manager has tried to convince agents to say, "Hey, listen, he's a little bit different or he's this and that." But they're like, "Well, we already have an Asian guy and that Asian guy can pretty much do everything, you know?" So finding representation has been really kind of an interesting journey. So that's similar to casting, you know? I do a lot of theater and that's certainly been the case where they talk about diversity casting. But, you know, signing the check is a different animal, you know, to get them to actually like sign on the dotted line to say, "I want to cast you." That's a bigger decision. So they're all very, a lot of them are very interested in meeting you and seeing your shows, um, but to actually, you know, cast an Asian American lead in a role that's not written for an Asian American or in a play that's not about the, you know, um, is an identity-driven piece. It's a different, it's a different dialogue, you know, because, you know, it's like if you have, I mean, it's if you have, you have a show that's like four different, you know, white men and women and you have one minority, then it's like, okay, well, that's good. But then if you suddenly have, you know, three minorities and one white guy, then it's like, is this, is this story about race? Is it a story about black people or Asian people? You know? Um, I think that lingers in the back of a lot of people's minds. I don't think they're, it's as on the surface, but as a minority, I certainly see kind of hints of that, you know, that they're almost afraid to make things too ethnic or too cultural, um, as opposed to no, it's just an American story.

[Josephine Von Oswald]: Yes. Um, especially in the non-union section of work just because a lot of like student films and low-budget movies always look for the all-American type, which is either black or white, and I'm neither. So it's like really hard to go out for that or actually not hard, I can't just go out for that role because it's just like, you know, we need a white, blonde, skinny female, or we need, you know, the typical ghetto black girl. And it's just like, you know, I can't do. So yeah, um, yes, I do think that, uh, I'm kind of limited in my roles.

[Tierney Dale]: As African-American, and as a female, you're not going to have a lot of roles that are just written for you. I get a lot of that. And so I'm like, well, how do I break into the industry, you know? I'm African-American, I'm young, and I'm a female. No, no, no. Well, what's the yes? So I've been focusing on that, and I feel like there are roles for me, and I've been seeing a lot more roles come out for me. And it's not necessarily the main character, but I'm here doing what I love to do. So it's not about being the main character for me. It's about, you know, doing what I love to do, making a living out of it, and just enjoying my job.

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Transcript for Figure 12.24, Depictions of Transgender "Deception" in Media

[Rantasmo]: So a couple of years ago, Seth Macfarlane spoke to thebacklot.com, which was then called afterelton.com, about an upcoming episode of "Family Guy" featuring a transgender character. This is what he said: "I can safely say that the transsexual community will be very, very happy with the 'Quagmire' episode that we have coming up in a couple of months. It's probably the most sympathetic portrayal of a transsexual character that has ever been on television, dare I say." This is the episode that he was describing.

[Brian]: I had sex with her!

[Continuous retching.]

[Prolonged sigh.]

[Music]

[Rantasmo]: As much as I would dearly love to blame all of life's problems on Seth Macfarlane, this isn't a trope that he invented. Transgender characters, particularly trans women, have an unfortunate history of being portrayed not only as objects of disgust, but of deceit. Their identities are used as plot twists, and in the most malicious examples, they're portrayed as traps that straight, cisgender men fall into. And, for some reason, immediately barf? Seriously, guys, what is with all the barfing?

Perhaps the most iconic example of this particular trope is in “The Crying Game”, a thriller from 1992 about a member of the Irish Republican Army, Fergus, who becomes involved with a deceased British soldier’s girlfriend, Dil, who is later revealed to be transgender. By which I mean they’re about to have sex, and then we get a close-up of her business. I actually feel like this is probably the most sympathetic example of this trope to date. Like, yeah, Fergus does the barfing thing, but he gets over it relatively quickly, and he even ends up staying in the relationship in spite of some much more dangerous complications. The whole thing’s framed as more of a misunderstanding than an outright deception.

[Fergus]: [retching]

[Dil]: I’m sorry! I thought you knew!

[Rantasmo]: But “The Crying Game” also came at a time when it was a lot more common for people to conflate transgender women with gay men. And it doesn’t do a great job of making that distinction.

[Fergus]: Thing is, Dil, you’re not a girl!

[Dil]: Details, baby, details.

[Rantasmo]: In fact, there are a lot of reviews from ’92 calling Dil a transvestite or a gay man in drag. And I can’t even unequivocally say that she’s not that, because the movie never quite makes it clear. I’m not even sure it knows the difference, because as far as the narrative’s concerned, the difference doesn’t matter. That’s a trait it shares with other movies, where the reveal of a character’s sex is little more than a cheap gag at the expense of trans people.

Is the murderous Einhorn from “Ace Ventura” a trans woman, or a man in disguise? Who cares, look how gross she is! Ew! Hell, this has even happened on reality dating shows.

[Miriam]: I’m not a woman.

[Men]: [Laughing.]

[Miriam]: I was born as a man.

[Men]: [Laughing.] Aw, man!

[Rantasmo]: Well, uh...at least they’re not barfing. Using transgender identity as a shocking plot twist or a wacky misunderstanding wouldn’t be that big a deal if it happened in a vacuum. But we’re talking about a demographic that’s still practically invisible in the media. So it sucks that so much of what little transgender representation actually exists frames them as some sort of hazard designed to elicit horror or ridicule. Especially since “trans panic” has been used in courtrooms to defend actual, real violence against trans people.

What’s more, this tripe gives the impression that trans people are somehow lying by not disclosing their quote-unquote “real” gender. Speaking as a cisgender guy, I’m in no way an authority here, but it seems to me that trans people are under no more obligation to disclose the details of their gender history than I am to tell guys on the first date what my genitalia looks like.

“Hey, you didn’t tell me your d*ck was made of amethyst!” Personally, I’d like to see more stories framed from a transgender point of view. A big problem with the “trap” trope is that it reinforces the cisgender male gaze. And one way of fixing that is giving trans characters more agency in the narrative outside of just being a spectacle for us to react to. There have been a few examples of this, but we could really use more. Because truth told, transphobia is what really makes me wanna barf.

[Music]

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Transcript for Figure 13.4, Systemic Racism Explained

Introduction

This is Jamal. Jamal is a boy who lives in a poor neighborhood. He has a friend named Kevin who lives in a wealthy neighborhood. All of Jamal's neighbors are African-American, and all of Kevin's neighbors are white. Because Jamal's school district is mostly funded by property taxes, his school is not very well funded. His classrooms are overcrowded, his teachers are underpaid, and he doesn't have access to high-quality tutors or extracurricular activities. Kevin's school district is also funded by property taxes, so his school is very well funded. His classrooms are never crowded, his teachers are very well paid, and he has access to high-quality tutors and lots of extracurricular activities.

Kevin and Redlining

Jamal lives only a few streets away from Kevin, so how come they're growing up in such different worlds with such different opportunities for success? The answer has to do with America's history of systemic racism. To understand it better, let's look at what life was like for Kevin and Jamal's grandparents. Decades after the Civil War, many government agencies started to draw maps dividing cities into sections that were either desirable or undesirable for investment. This practice was called redlining, and it usually blocked off entire Black neighborhoods from access to private and public investment. Banks and insurance companies used these maps for decades to deny Black people loans and other services based purely on race.

Historically speaking, owning a home and getting a college education is the easiest way for an American family to build wealth. But when Jamal's grandparents wanted to buy a house, the banks refused because they lived in a neighborhood that was redlined. So Jamal's grandparents were not able to buy a home, and because colleges could prevent them from attending through legal segregation, their options for higher education were really scarce. Kevin's grandparents, on the other hand, got a low-interest loan to buy their first house and got accepted into a handful of top universities, which traditionally only accepted white students. This opened up a wealth of opportunities that they were able to pass on to their kids and grandkids. Even as late as the 1980s, an investigation into the Atlanta real estate market showed that banks were more willing to lend to low-income white families than to middle or upper-income African-American families.

As a result, today, for every hundred dollars of wealth held by a white family, black families have five dollars and four cents. A 2017 study confirms that redlining is still affecting home values in major cities like Chicago today. This explains how Kevin and Jamal inherited vastly different circumstances.

Unfortunately, the story doesn't end there. A big part of systemic racism is implicit bias—prejudices in society that people are not aware that they have. Let's go back to Kevin and Jamal.

Kevin and Jamal

Against all odds, Jamal manages to be the only student from his high school to get accepted into a great university, the same one that Kevin and his high school friends are attending. But after Kevin and Jamal both graduate, Jamal notices that his resume isn't drawn as much interest as Kevin's, even though they graduated from the same program with the exact same GPA. Unfortunately for Jamal, studies show that resumes with white-sounding names get twice as many callbacks as identical resumes with black-sounding names. Implicit bias is one of the reasons why the black unemployment rate is twice the rate of white unemployment, even among college graduates.

Systemic Racism

You can see evidence of systemic racism in every area of life. The disparities in family wealth, incarceration rates, political representation, and education are all examples of systemic racism. Unfortunately, the biggest challenge with systemic racism is that there's no single person or entity responsible for it, which makes it very hard to solve.

What Can You Do?

What can you do? The first thing you can do is work towards becoming more aware of your own implicit biases. What are some prejudices that you might hold that you're not aware of? Second, let's acknowledge that the consequences of slavery and Jim Crow laws are still affecting access to opportunity today. As a result, we should support systemic changes that create more equal opportunities for everyone. Increasing public school funding and making it independent from property taxes would be a great start so that poor and wealthy districts can receive equal access to resources. Systemic problems require systemic solutions. Luckily, we're all part of the system, which means that we all have a role to play in making it better.

Peace.

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Transcript for Figure 13.5, What is Neurodiversity?

[Stephen Munt, counseling psychologist and psychotherapist]: What I mean by neurodiversity is that all brains are different.

[Jacinta Powell]: Growing up, I felt different to other people, and I sort of viewed myself as an outsider. And actually, that was okay, that was alright. I just sort of, somewhere in my heart, accepted that I was different. I don't think it made me feel very good or very well, but it was just who and what I was.

[Munt]: The term neurodiversity actually came into being in the context of the autism disability movement, for want of a better expression, where people with autism were saying, "Actually, you shouldn't see us as people having something wrong with us. We haven't got a disease, we're not broken, we are just different. We are towards the ends of a spectrum on which everybody is located."

[Powell]: I just thought I was a bit of a freak, to be honest with you. You know, I was like, "Well, why can't I cope with situations like family members or close friends? Why do I struggle in being around so many people?" Or yeah, it used to happen quite a lot in, well, social situations. And I would say that I was better on a one-to-one basis, but it would sort of impact me more when there were more than, you know, two people there.

[Munt]: What I'm trying to talk about is that if you are significantly different from the average person, and if we think about the average person as being in the middle of the bell curve—you know what I mean by that—so most of us are in the middle section. But of course, there are some of us who are towards the ends, aren't there? Just as a matter of probability, that is bound to be the case. And because we probably exist on many, many, and maybe millions of different dimensions, it's likely that all of us, in some respects, are outliers rather than average people who are the ones who are ascribed, described as normal.

[Powell]: I think one way I dealt with, I suppose, my difference, which I wasn't aware of growing up, was I was very shy, and I feel quite emotional saying this, but I think I sort of isolated myself from other people. And I've always had friends, but if I reflect how it was, it wasn't a very, you know, especially when I was a lot younger, pleasant experience for me. And it was almost like I sort of had, it would happen—I can write now when I think of it, it's like having an out-of-body experience. I sort of, yeah, and actually, maybe that is what happened, is that I used to sort of, you know, maybe dissociate or leave my body to deal with it because it was too stimulating for me.

[Munt]: The human world, of necessity, is created for the majority. That's just practical sense. If you're not, in certain respects, like the majority, if you're a bit different, adapting to that world can be very difficult, fitting into it can be very difficult. If you can't sit still and you're very distractible and you find it hard to attend to rather dull material, and if you struggle with learning to read and write, you're going to find it very difficult to do well at school. And that can have all four consequences.

[Powell]: If ADHD was something that was diagnosed when I was at school, I probably would have been, you know, not labeled, diagnosed for that. And the proof's in the pudding, is in my school reports. You know, it's so interesting, I found them recently, actually, and I'm so ashamed about them that I actually chucked them in. And that's a really sad thing, but I always got really good grades, but it was, it was my behavior. And it was, um, just, I can't sit still, just, since I can't stop talking. And so, I was always in trouble at school, but it was like something that I couldn't help and I wasn't aware of it at all. But that really, I think, you can see, with my emotion, it really dented my confidence because I was ten years old, having awful school reports and my parents having to go in and be told that I'm this disruptive person. And as a child, you know, you have no bad intentions, but you're being told there's something wrong with you, I suppose. So that was really, really challenging for me.

[Munt]: I think it's important to consider the matter of context as well, actually. If you've got what is often referred to as dyslexia, that's thought of as a disorder, but I prefer to call it difficulties with reading, learning to read and write. Actually, it only becomes salient in a literate society. In a preliterate society, it wouldn't exist, it wouldn't be noticed. The problem arises when somebody

who is not well adapted to functioning in a particular required way has to try and behave in that required way.

[Powell]: Now, I remember working in TV, and one of the things that we had to do were write character profiles, and I was always two or three behind. And this was before, I think, I was diagnosed with dyslexia, so it was years and years of not understanding myself or how I'm different. And that really sort of impacted when I was a boy, it really impacted on my self-esteem.

[Munt]: Something I haven't talked about is the impact on other people. And that's part of what I talked about in, when I'm counseling somebody who I think has this sort of individual difference, that very often it's actually difficult for other people as well.

[Powell]: I was probably a bit of a loose cannon with my, with my, my rational self-body. I was properly sort of reacting quite a lot to my environment, but that's not to say that my emotions weren't coming out with a frightened center as well.

[Munt]: I think there's a tendency to think that people who are normal are all the same, and that people who are abnormal within their disorder categories, if you see what I mean, within their diagnostic categories, that they're all the same as well, and that there's a kind of cutoff between, you know, those who are normal and those who are abnormal. And what I'm thinking about is a much finer gradation of difference on a very large number of spectra or dimensions.

[Powell]: Probably the most helpful thing for me in terms of my neurodiversity and where I am on the spectrum, or you know, how I vary to others, has been just the simple thing of — it was a counselor that reflected – my huge, my huge empathic quality. That was key, that was fundamental. Understanding that I was very emotionally sensitive, understanding that I had huge emotional sensitivity, and then not reacting to it, and just sort of loving myself within it, holding myself really and centering myself, and becoming more into my zone than other people's zones, that was sort of, and that is the process that I'm still in, really, that sort of when. So that's been so, so helpful.

[Munt]: The neurodiversity movement within the autism conversation has talked about invisible disability, and the political part of it is saying, "Well, you know, if other forms of disability are granted special consideration in terms of access and things like that, then perhaps we should get this too." And I think I've got a lot of sympathy for that.

[Powell]: Since understanding who I am and my sensitivities more, and I've been able to sort of center myself and find methods to calm myself down, whether it's, you know, my emotions coming up or maybe there's a lot going on in the environment and that's overstimulating me, so you know, I've realized that spending a lot, a lot of time on my own, centering myself, is actually key to my overall well-being. So I walk a lot, I love being in nature, and that makes me feel really present and held and safe. And that gives me time to really be with my inner self and my, you know, inner child. You know, there's lots of different ways of describing that.

[Munt]: The temptation for the therapist could be, if they weren't alive to this, it could be to assure the person that there's nothing wrong with them. Now obviously, there's a problem with saying there's something wrong with you. And I'm not saying there's something wrong, I'm saying actually, you have some significant individual differences from the norm which make life in certain situations a lot more challenging and difficult than they are for most people. And actually, we need to recognize that. It's an unfortunate fact. Now how are we going to deal with it better?

[Powell]: Now we know how to look after myself and what situations, you know, do and don't work for me. And, you know, now I've been able to manage that better. I know it's not a character flaw or something negative about me. I've been able to bring it into my life in a positive way. I might just go home, I can see that person might need a hug, or just, you know, maybe they might want to, maybe I should ask them that question to see how they're feeling. And I don't know why I feel it, I should all about this, but maybe that's what—maybe I lack that in my life as well. But so going back to my life now, I see that they're gifts because I can give it to people, and actually it brings positive things into my life, into my relationships, into my work, and my family as well.

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Transcript for Figure 13.8, Newberg's Ban on Pride Flags at Schools Gets National Attention

[Dan Haggerty, host of The Story on KGW]: So should we, should we get into this Newberg thing? Let's get into this Newberg thing. After all, the rest of the country seems to be awfully interested in it.

I want to start with a quick recap just to get everybody up to speed. A lot of you may already know some of this stuff, but the school board in Newburgh recently banned the Black Lives Matter symbol and the pride symbol from its schools. The board members who voted for this say they want to keep politics out of the classroom, and they believe those are political symbols. Now this has divided the community. Some neighbors, they built a huge pride flag in a field as a protest. Meanwhile, the ACLU wants to sue the district saying the ban is unconstitutional, but the school board – they're sticking with it.

So let's boil this down a bit, shall we? I talked to a journalist named Ryan Clark with the Newberg Graphic. He knows his story and he knows his community, inside and out, and I want to start by talking about each symbol on its own, beginning with the pride flag and why the board views a symbol that has always been a representation of inclusion as a polarizing political Image.

[Ryan Clark]: Board members have said on the record that they believe that LGBTQ people in the LGBTQ movement generally is inherently political and has an agenda.

I will say that Newberg historically is a conservative Christian community, but there I know of many people and speak to them constantly in the community who are both LGBTQ and devout Christians. Whether they be students at George Fox University, professors, community members, business owners. There are people of all walks of life in Newberg. There's more diversity than someone on the outside might think is in a rural suburban community.

[Haggerty]: OK, now look. Don't start tweeting at me just yet. Let's keep going here. 'Cause next I want to talk about Black Lives Matter. The slogan of a social movement that asked people to consider certain aspects of racism and discrimination and inequality that is exclusive to people of color in this country. Now what makes this symbol arguably different from the Pride flag is that BLM is an actual organization that has a political agenda.

But how do the people who are opposed to this ban grapple with the fact that Black Lives Matter is an actual organization that is politically – does have a political stance, that does collect donations for political means?

[Clark]: The biggest thing I've heard from from black people in Newberg and black activists and their allies is that the signs themselves do not indicate support for Black Lives Matter the organization, nor do they come from that organization specifically. They aren't purchased from BLM, the organization, but the signs do affirm to black students that their life matters.

[Haggerty]: Now I know this is a touchy topic. I know that I'm sure you've probably already made up your mind and not just on the topic, but on my potential bias one way or another, as I'm reporting this story. But I do want you to consider something that is indisputable and keep that in mind. There are Republicans and there are Democrats both who support the phrase Black Lives Matter and what it stands for. There are Republicans and Democrats who support the LGBTQIA community. Your skin color or your sexual orientation does not decide your political party. Or how you feel about politics, immigration, abortion mask mandates, how we're handling a warming climate, or if you support police. That was one of the arguments when people wanted a thin blue line flag to be removed from an office in Aloha High School. That symbol was always something that's supported police and recognized fallen officers. But it's also been co-opted for political purposes and people wanted it to come down. The district defended it by the way, citing free speech.

So I was curious with the school board in Newberg thinks of that flag and if that flag has a place in their schools or if this discussion about political symbols is exclusive to pride and BLM.

Have they commented at all about about that?

[Clark]: Not even remotely. They've been asked by opposing board members who. Have questioned how this would apply to other political items and they said it would be a case by case basis. As far as flags that might be on the other side of the aisle or clothing that staff might wear, at this point, they have have not been as specific as they have been with the Black Lives Matter signage and the pride flags, and that cuts to the core of what seems to be a lot of folks in the community and and they've told me this, and in the stories I've reported, this seems to be an intensely political issue here.

[Haggerty]: Clearly yes, this is an intensely political issue, but the question is, is that because those symbols are innately political

or because we are making them political in Newberg on both sides of the issue?

Either way, it may not matter. Like I said before, the ACLU wants to sue. They think this is an infringement on the Constitution and the right to free speech, and it might be. In fact, the district isn't even sure. Right now, they're trying to figure it out as we speak. Let me know what you think. Email us at thestory@kgw.com, find me on Facebook and Instagram. Or you can use Twitter and the hashtag heydan.

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Transcript for Figure 13.24, US College Students Need Help

[Hank Green]: Good morning John, 10 years ago when we first started making Crash Course I had a pretty specific idea of what kind of help students needed in high school and college. They needed better tools for learning! And they do. And I'm really proud of the work Crash Course has done in that space. But also, during those 10 years the outcomes for your typical high school junior have not been great. 84% of those kids want to continue their education after high school but only about 66% of them will. And of the people who go onto college, only 60% of those people will actually get a degree. And so yes, about 40% of Americans with student loans are not going to get a degree.

My first impulse when hearing this is "this is a learning problem. We need to teach these kids better." And that is part of the problem, arguably the larger part is just understanding how this tremendously complex system works. Admissions, financial aid, credit transfer, degree paths, a huge variety of institutions with a huge variety of systems. Only 20% of students receive counseling on how best to pay for college. Only 30% receive counseling on how admissions works. And worst of all of course, people for whom this is hardest are the ones who get the least support from their institutions and systems. And they're also the ones who, on average, have the least time and money to deal with it.

If you need more aid and more loans, it's much more likely that you have a fulltime or part-time job during the period in which you are applying to school. You're also much more likely to have unpaid work doing childcare or elder care, and you're less likely to have other people in your life who have gone through and experienced these systems who can give you advice. Everything from loans to majors to transferring credits from community college to class selection, career counseling, financing. This is a big, messy bureaucracy. Anybody who interfaces with it, even people inside of it, will tell you this. They know it's hard. But the less you know, the more likely you are to end up in a situation where you've boxed yourself into a bad outcome. Or you may even be being taken advantage of by bad institutions. The inability to make an informed decision when it's one of the most important decisions you're ever going to make, is one of the main reasons why so many students end up with loans but no degree. And we understood none of this when we were first making Crash Course.

So over the last couple years for you and me, and a lot of the people who work at Complexly, we've undergone a bit of a Crash Course in understanding how higher education actually works in this country. And we had a little bit of help with that. So I'm excited to be telling you that in partnership with Arizona State University, we are launching a new Youtube channel called Study Hall.

And also we're launching a new course on Crash Course. It's called Crash Course How to College, a course that takes on all of the options a person in the U.S. has to face when considering their future. From financial aid, to admissions, to majors and careers.

Now we already made a series of courses with ASU under the name Study Hall, with the specific goal of helping people with the subjects that most interfere with a student's ability to succeed in early college. Now we are launching the Study Hall project as a whole Youtube channel starting with a series that I'm extremely excited about. It's called Fast Guides. The Fast Guides are a quick but pretty deep dive into what you're getting yourself into when you're choosing a major. What work can you expect? What skills do you need? What are good alternatives if you want to switch majors from that major? And what do graduates in that major end up doing after graduation? I'm so excited about these 2 new things, I've learned so much about why they are necessary.

So please check out Crash Course How to College and the Study Hall Youtube channel, and send them to everyone you know who might be going to college in the near future. Including yourself. I have seen the tremendous amount of work and thought and

care that has gone into these things. And I know that when good people work hard together they really can help to solve hard problems. So tell everyone you know! There are links in the description and also probably right here. John, I'll see you on Tuesday.

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Transcript for Figure 14.3, Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl

[Instructor]: During the Holocaust in the 1940s, Viktor Frankl spent three years as a prisoner in the Auschwitz and Dachau concentration camps. His wife, father, mother and brother died in these camps. He was faced with extreme hunger, debilitating illnesses and brutal living conditions, yet unlike the prisoners around him he somehow managed to find hope and meaning during one of the most catastrophic events in human history. It's no wonder Man's Search for Meaning sold over 10 million copies and became one of the most influential books in the world. With that said, let's have a look at three powerful lessons we can learn from the book.

Lesson one, he who has a 'why' to live for can bear with almost any 'how.' Frankl was confronted by a fellow inmate, let's call him Felix. Felix shared a dream he had in February 1945. A voice told him he could wish for something so he wished to know when he would be liberated from the concentration camp and have his sufferings come to an end. The voice replied, March the 30th. Felix had a strong sense of hope and was convinced the voice in his dream was right. As the date ticked closer the war got worse, making it appear to be very unlikely that freedom was near. On March the 29th, Felix suddenly became ill. On March the 30th, the day he expected to be free, he lost consciousness. On March 31st he was dead. To paraphrase Frankl's own words, the ultimate cause of my friend's death was that the expected liberation did not come and he was severely disappointed. This suddenly lowered his body's resistance against the latent typhus infection. His faith in the future and his will to live had become paralyzed and his body fell victim to illness and thus the voice of his dream was right after all. To back up this case, the chief doctor of the concentration camp witnessed an increased death rate of prisoners between Christmas 1944 and New Years 1945. The doctor believed this was due to prisoners having false hope that they would be home again by Christmas. As the time drew near, many lost hope and fell into an endless sleep. So you might be asking, what can we learn from these stories? Well Frankl sums it up by saying, "Any attempt to restore a man's inner strength "in the camp had first to succeed "in showing him some future goal. "Whenever there was an opportunity for it, "one had to give them a why, "an aim for their lives, in order to strengthen them "to bear the terrible how of their existence." Basically, the prisoners who found a reason to live had a stronger will to live and chance of coming out alive and those without a reason to keep going, increased their likelihood of severe illness and death. Frankl goes on to describe two prisoners who were contemplating suicide. They used the typical argument that they had nothing more to expect from life, but they didn't commit suicide. Why, because they found meaning, a reason to keep going. For one it was his child waiting for him in a foreign country, the other man was a scientist who had written a series of books which still needed to be finished. A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the why for his existence and will be able to bear almost any how.

Lesson two, love is the ultimate and highest goal to which a man can aspire. Frankl emphasizes that everyone's meaning is completely unique and that love is the ultimate and highest goal to which a man can aspire. It was one man's love for his child that kept him pushing forward and for another it was his love for sharing his findings with the world through books. For Frankl himself, it was the love for his wife that kept him going. He realized the power of love on a cold dark day where he and his inmates were commanded to march out to a work site. They emaciated prisoners were beaten and forced to trudge over large stones and icy terrain. One inmate whispered to Frankl, if our wives could see us now, I do hope they are better off in their camps and don't know what is happening to us. Upon reflecting on this time in the past, Frankl said, "I did not know whether my wife was alive and I had no means of finding out. "But at that moment it ceased to matter. "There was no need for me to know; nothing could touch "the strength of my love, my thoughts, "and the image of my beloved. "Had I known then that my wife was "dead, I think that I would still have given myself, "undisturbed by that knowledge, to the contemplation "of her image and that my mental conversation "with her would have been just as vivid "and just as satisfying."

The final lesson is this, when we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. Before Frankl was put in a concentration camp, he was working as a clinical psychiatrist. He once had a client with severe depression. Let's call him Peter. Peter could not overcome the loss of his wife who died two years ago. Frankl asked him, what would have happened if

you had died first and your wife would have had to survive for you. Oh, he said, for her this would have been terrible. She would have suffered. Frankl replied, you see, Peter, such a suffering has been spared and it was you who have spared her this suffering. He said nothing, shook Frankl's hand and calmly left the office. Frankl said, "In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering "in the moment it finds a meaning. "such as the meaning of a sacrifice. "Of course this was no therapy in the proper sense "since first his despair was no disease; "and second I could not change his fate; "I could not revive his wife. "But in that moment, I did succeed in changing his attitude "toward his unalterable fate and he could now at least "see a meaning in his suffering." In the world today, countless people who have found themselves in seemingly hopeless circumstances have found meaning in their lives. Nick Vujicic is a living example. He was born with no arms or legs but he overcame his disabilities to live an independent, rich, fulfilling life where he serves as a role model to help millions of people to overcome adversity and living meaningful lives. Some things in life are inevitable. The loss of loved ones, terminal illnesses, and forgotten memories. Whatever we do, Man's Search for Meaning challenges us to accept that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find a meaning in it, and move forward.

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Transcript for Figure 14.12, Taken from Their Families

[Walter Little Moon]: I ended up in a place where nothing... nothing... nothing made any sense at all. You know, it wasn't home. It wasn't... I didn't know anything about school. Nobody ever told me anything about school. I didn't know what education was.

I remember that I wanted to go home. Period. I didn't want to be there; I just wanted to go home.

[Dennis Banks]: We all had to strip down naked, and then they put the DDT on us. They line us up and they're cutting our hair. You have long hair, you have braids, and then that gets cut off. And I would say within a matter of an hour and a half we're standing there, all looking alike.

[Narrator]: Between the 1870s and the 1960s, over 100,000 Indian children were sent to one of the nearly 500 boarding schools scattered across the United States.

[Historical Speech]: Through the agencies of the government, they are being rapidly brought from their state of comparative savagery and barbarism to one of civilization. (Children singing "Ten Little Indians")

[Banks]: You couldn't sing any Native songs or tribal songs.

They just started using English. You could only... you could not use any other language. We'd whisper, "Pass the bkwezhgan, bkwezhgan"– pass the bread over. It's like I had to be two people. I had to be Nowa Cumig, and I had to be Dennis Banks. Nowa Cumig is my real name, my Ojibwa name. Dennis Banks had to be very protective of Nowa Cumig. And so I learned who the presidents were. And I learned the math. I learned the social studies. I learned the English, and Nowa Cumig was still there.

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Transcript for Figure 14.13, The U.S. Government's Education of Native American Children

[Walter Little Moon]: This is education that was promised us, that was guaranteed us through the treaties, but it wasn't. It was torture. Brainwashing. They called us many different names... Savage. Dumb. I got beat for looking like an Indian, smelling like an

Indian, even speaking Indian. Everything I did. (cries)

[Dennis Banks]: Their de-Indianization program, it failed. But the toll was devastating. It destroyed our family. It destroyed the relationship we had with our mother. I could never regain that friendship-loveship relationship that I had with my mother. It wasn't there anymore, and that's what, to this day, I keep thinking, that, you know, damn this government, what it did to me and what it did to thousands of other children across this country.

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Transcript for Figure 14.14, Remaining Native

[Ku Stevens]: I was raised in a sweat lodge, you know, in that kind of atmosphere going to bear camp each year, going to Sundance each year. You know, those are just hard native things. I've always just been native.

[Delmar Stevens]: Ku was a fun little kid. He liked to run. When he was maybe four or five and there was a kids half mile, he sprinted it, it was just fast.

[Ku]: You know, they always told me, your legs are going to take you places. I just wish it could have happened sooner. We just didn't have the resources.

I can just imagine my people out here know and what they had to go through and the odds of me being here right now. It's just... it's crazy.

[Delmar]: Grandpa was Frank Quinn. He was born in 1905. When he was eight years old, he was stolen from his family and taken to Stewart. He rebelled. He left three times as a little boy.

[News report]: Authorities in Canada have uncovered the remains of 215 children at the site of a former residential school for indigenous students.

[Misty Stevens]: I saw the announcement of the children in Canada.

[Ku]: I just thought of my great grandfather. How could an eight year old do that? Cross over mountains, 50 miles in a couple of days? It's just unthinkable.

[Misty]: With all of the news coming out, we needed to come together and try and help. So we decided to do it. Running from Stewart to Yerington like his grandpa.

[Ku, speaking to a crowd]: I want to thank all of you, really, because this has been a dream of me and my dad's for a while. And by you being here, every single one of you, you're fulfilling that. And it's something that's needed.

[Ku]: It's just not that simple. You know, it's a lot deeper than that. And a lot of people don't know that at all.

[Music]

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Transcript for Figure 14.17, Marie's Dictionary

[In the United States more than 130 Native American languages are endangered. Several are on the verge of extinction with only a handful of fluent speakers remaining.]

[Marie Wilcox, speaking Wukchumni]: A long time ago there were no people, only animals. Eagle, our leader, said to the animals we must make people. All the animals wanted people to have hands like theirs.

[Wilcox, in English]: My name is Marie Wilcox. My grandmother delivered me Thanksgiving Day on November 24th, 1933. We only had a little one-room house. Grandpa and grandma always spoke our language, Wukchumni. I just didn't hear my grandma speak too much English.

[Jennifer Malone, Wilcox's daughter]: Knock, knock, knock.

Mom is our last fluent speaker now since my dad's uncle, Felix Icho, passed away. When I was growing up I spoke English. I don't remember hearing Mom speaking the Wukchumni language.

Mom worked in the fields. We picked a lot of fruit. And I think I missed a lot of school but I don't know for sure.

[Wilcox]: I left my Indian language behind when my grandma died. I didn't speak the language anymore until my sisters started to teach the kids. Hearing the girls try to speak their language again made me want to learn again. And I started remembering.

[Malone]: I was very surprised she could remember all that from age—young age that her grandmother had left her. She just started writing down her words on envelopes and papers. And so she'd sit up night after night typing on the computer which — she was never a computer person.

[Wilcox]: I'm just a pecker. One word at a time. And I was slow. Just peck, peck, peck. So when I had all these words together I thought it would be a good idea to try to make a dictionary. I didn't say that I wanted to save it for anybody else to learn. I just wanted to get it together.

Every morning I'd have my coffee and have a sandwich or maybe oatmeal or whatever, and then I'd get right on that.

[Malone]: It took many years for her to do this dictionary. She loved doing it. She would work many hours late at night, and get up and work on it during the day.

[Wilcox]: And the X sound — Oh, that's the hardest one for everybody.

[Malone]: I've been working with Mom on this dictionary for all the years. And I've helped her a lot.

[Wilcox]: The A right here. Oh, there. It made the "tr" sound and the "ch" sound sounds a little bit alike to me, but I don't....You got it?

[Malone]: I got it. I feel it.

It's very frustrating because she wanted to make sure I knew how to say the words right. So if I would say something and she can't hear that well — "That's not how I said it." I would kind of get scolded.

[Wilcox]: We gotta go through this whole thing again because I didn't like the sentences. They didn't make sense to me.

[Malone]: Oh. It just seemed like it would take forever. I am very surprised that we've gotten as far as we have.

[Malone]: Do you want your jacket?

[WIlcox]: Yeah.

[Wilcox, in Wukchumni]: Coyote and Lizard wanted people to have hands like theirs. Eagle said, Coyote and Lizard will run a race. Run to the top of the mountain, and whoever puts their hands on top is the winner.

[Wilcox]: Thank you.

[Malone]: You're welcome. All right now. Are you ready?

[Wilcox]: Yes.

Lake. Ocean. Sea.

Me and my grandson are trying to record our dictionary from A to Z. The whole dictionary took me about seven years. So that was a lot of work for me.

Language. Talk. Speak.

See, I'm uncertain about my language and who wants to keep it alive. Just a few. No one seems to want to learn. It's sad. It just seems weird that I am the last one. And — I don't know, it just — It'll just be gone one of these days maybe. I don't know. It might go on or not.

[Wilcox]: Put the rice in there. I know. Actually get the...

[Donovan, Marie's grandson]: Colander?

[Wilcox]: Yes, the colander.

[Donovan]: O.k. All of it?

[Wilcox]: Maybe. More. That's good.

[Malone]: I think she has a little confidence in me. But I know she has more confidence in Donovan because the way he's really connecting with her and learning the language so fast— because I've been working on it all these years and I haven't been able to speak with her like he does.

[Wilcox]: What now? You need a lid like this for that. A little one.

My role I feel is to archive it all, make sure that it gets documented and put somewhere to where a hundred years from now our families will be able to access and to be able to speak. And it will keep going with me and Donovan, I know.

[Wilcox, speaking Wukchumni]: Lizard was the first one to put his hands on the big rock and jumped up and down, laughing and saying ha ha ha, I won. I won the race. Now people will have hands like mine.

[Marie's dictionary is the first Wukchumni dictionary to be created. It serves as an inspiration to other Native American tribes working to revitalize their languages. Jennifer and Marie are now teaching weekly Wukchumni language classes to members of their tribe.]

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Transcript for Figure 14.18, Native Rap

[In Diné and English.]

Greetings my relatives and my people. I am called N8V ACE.

I am of the Water's Edge Clan, born for the five finger hand people

My maternal grandfathers are of the Bitter Water Clan. My paternal grandfathers are of the Five Finger Hand people.

That is how I am a Diné man.

I was born in Shiprock. I am from Red Mesa. I live in Albuquerque.

That is how I reside. Oh yeah my friend, I am Diné.

Representing, representing my people. I am called N8V ACE.

Representing, representing my people. Yes, I am Diné.

Representing, representing my people. I am called N8V ACE

Representing, representing my people. Yes, I am Diné.

I'm a N8V Navajo like Chief Manuelito, Chief Narbona, and Chief Barboncito.

My Pendleton bandana is tied to the right side, eagle claw chain hangin'

Feathers on that thang swangin'. Try to test me in my traditional moccasins.... Boy quit playin'

I am [–]. What you thinking?

R.I.P. Chief Joseph in my Pendleton blanket

Navajo language code talk out the system cranking. Navajo Pride with my Diné rug hanging

Good morning with my white corn powder

Thank you our Holy Ones, with my yellow corn pollen.

Thunder in the horizon.... yeah, those are my ancestors callin'.

Step to the Chief and we all ridin'.

N8V ACE, Navajo Tribe, Diné Nation.

Representing, representing my people. I am called N8V ACE.

Representing, representing my people. Yes, I am Diné.

Representing, representing my people. I am called N8V ACE.

Representing, representing my people. Yes, I am Diné.

May things become balanced / peaceful / harmonious, Our Mother Earth.

Our Father Sky, the Sun, the Moon, the Holy People, and the Holy Ones.

Thank you for the life we have, it's beautiful.

Holy Mountains: Mt. Blanca, Mt. Taylor, San Francisco Peaks, Mt. Hesperus, Chimney Mountain, El Huerfano Mesa.

May there be harmony in all directions our Holy Ones.

From the East, to the East.

From the South, to the South.

From the West, to the West.

From the North, to the North.

From below, to below. From above, to above. Around us

May there be peace everywhere our Holy Ones.

With food, may we be physically strong. With water, may we have inner strength.

With corn pollen, may we have happiness throughout ourselves.

Thank you our Holy Ones. Diné Nation.

Representing, representing my people. I am called N8V ACE.

Representing, representing my people. Yes, I am Diné.

Representing, representing my people. I am called N8V ACE.

Representing, representing my people.

Yes, I am Diné.

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