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# ***Sizzling Summer Series***

**UNMC Office of Public Health Practice  
Midwestern Public Health Training Center  
Wichita State University and St. Louis University's College for  
Public Health and Social Justice**

**June 10, 2021  
10:00-11:30am**

# Session Objectives

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- Recognize how identity is formed
- Discuss identity in a social and cultural construct
- Explore theories related to identity
- Discuss ways to provide responsive healthcare

# What is Identity?

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- Our sense of self
- The way we see ourselves as individuals
- The way we interact with others

# Definitions of Identity

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- Qualities, beliefs, personality, looks/expressions that make a person or group (Wikipedia)
- The fact of being who or what a person or thing is (Oxford Languages)
- The distinguishing character or personality of an individual, individuality (Merriam -Webster)

# Identity

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- A compilation of integrated, fluid identities based in contexts like gender, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disabilities, and countless others
- When we interact with others who are like us, we learn about our identities through mirroring, modeling and recognition
- An intact identity formed in partnership with others, is critical for leading a healthy life, psychologically and physically

# Identity

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- Identity is an ambiguous and slippery term
- Identity is something unique to each of us, but also implies a relationship with a broader group
- Identity can change according to your circumstances:
  - Professional Identity
  - Personal identity

# Self Identity and Social Identity

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- **Self Identity** refers to how we define ourselves. Self-identity forms the basis of our self-esteem. It changes in response to peers, family, school or work and other social environments.
- **Social Identity** is constructed by others and may differ from self identity. Typically, people categorize individuals according to broad socially-defined labels. (dark skinned labeled, even though you don't identify)

# Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

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- One of the first to propose a lifespan model of human development which included eight successive psychosocial stages.
- Erikson continues to receive a great deal of credit for recognizing the influence of culture on development.
- Believed that the individual cannot be understood apart from his or her social context (individual and society are intricately woven).

# Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

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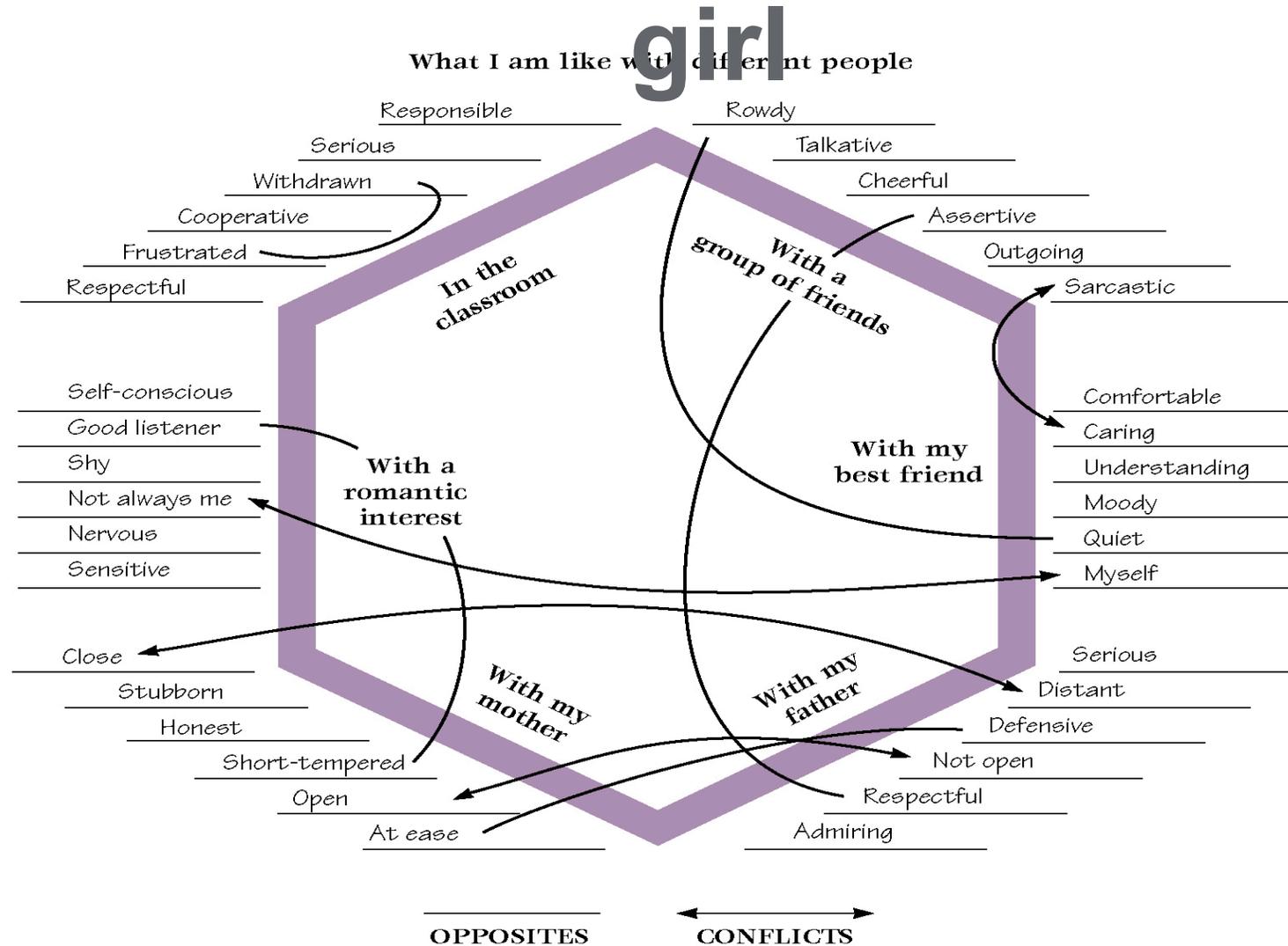
- A child takes on characteristics of parents or significant others (Identification)
- Identity formation begins when the usefulness of identification ends
- Erikson believed the primary psychosocial task of adolescence is the formation of identity
- Increased independence leads to greater interactions with neighbors, communities and schools

# Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

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- Identity is formed when one can answer: who am I and what is my place in the world?
- Identity allows the individual to know his or her place in the world, provides a sense of well-being, a sense of direction in one's life, mattering to those that count.
- Erikson held that identity development does not end with formation, its an ongoing process (difficult to assess identity development beyond adolescence).

# The multiple selves of a 15-year-old



# Social Identity Theory

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- Henri Tajfel created the Social Identity Theory in 1979.
- Groups which people belonged to are an important source of pride and self-esteem.
- These groups give us a sense of identity and a sense of belonging in the social world.

# Social Identity Theory

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- To increase our self image, we must enhance the status of our group
- Social Identity Theory states that in-group's members will actively seek to find negative aspects of an out-group, which in turns enhances their self image (racism, sexism)

# Social Identity Theory

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- Stereotyping is a normal process, and we do this by grouping together the differences between groups and the similarities
- We categorize people in the same way we see the group they belong to (in-group), as being different to others (out-group)
- Stereotypes is one explanation for prejudice attitudes, which eventually leads to in-groups and out-groups

# Social Identity Theory

- There are three mental processes involved in the evaluation of the in-group and the out-group
  - Social Categorization - we stereotype people to understand the social environment, this can be via race, religion or occupation
  - Social Identification - we adopt the identity of the group we belong to (athlete, student)
  - Social Comparison - once we have categorized ourselves, we tend to compare that group with out-groups in order for our self esteem to be maintained

# Comparison

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- People compare themselves and their groups with other groups, seeing a favorable bias towards the group in which they belong.
- People divide themselves into social groups or subcultures, based on clothing, music or other interest.
- Social Identity Theory can be applied to:
  - Age, location, family, class

# Illusionary Correlations

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- Argue that stereotypes are a result of illusionary correlations
- Humans see relationships between two variables (women & poor mathematics) even when there is evidence to prove no correlation
- Confirmation Bias - Humans look for evidence and examples that defend their beliefs and ignore the evidence and examples that do not fit

# Theories of Social Cognition

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- Deals with the way people perceive/think about themselves and others
- How people process information about their own group (in-group) and other groups (out-groups)
- Ethnic and cultural identity forms the core of the conceptual frameworks, links self-definition to group membership

# Racism and Social Cognition

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- Racism does not require the presence of malice, only the presence of bias and ignorance willful or otherwise
- Racism is interpersonal and structural; it is current and historical; it is explicit and implicit; it is articulated and silent (Charles Blow, NY Times Editorialist)

# Intergroup Stereotypes

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- In-group favoritism is also present in intergroup stereotypes
- Negative out-group stereotypes have significant implications for prejudice and discrimination
- Social Psychological Theory suggests that increased contact, at least under certain conditions, may improve perceptions
- Crystallization Hypothesis: increased contact may sharpen intergroup perceptions

# Culture

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- An integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society
- Culture refers to the total way of life of a particular group of people
- It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does and makes (a system of attitudes and feelings)

# Ethnic Identity

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- Assimilation
  - adopting the majority culture's norms and standards while rejecting those of one's own group
- Marginality
  - living within the majority culture but feeling estranged and outcast
- Separation
  - associating only with members of one's own culture and rejecting the majority culture
- Biculturalism
  - maintaining ties to both the majority and the minority cultures

# Equity Frameworks

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- Community-Based Participatory Action Research
- Social Ecological Framework
- Predictive Analytics
  - Predict, align, prevent

# Health Equity Framework

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- Assessment
  - Assess and monitor population health
  - Investigate, diagnose root causes
- Policy Development
  - Inform and educate
  - Mobilize community partnerships
  - Create champions

# Health Equity Framework

- Assurance
  - Build strong organizational infrastructure
  - Evaluation, research and quality improvement
  - Diverse and skilled workforce
  - Enable equitable access

# Brave Leadership

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- Embrace vulnerability (stick with the messy middle of problem identification and solving)
- Think less about who we are, and more about how we behave (who we are is how we will lead)
- Create a culture where people are seen, heard, and respected (courage is contagious)
- Care for, and be connected to, the people we lead

# Contact Information

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