

## How do you feel about your own aging?

### Background

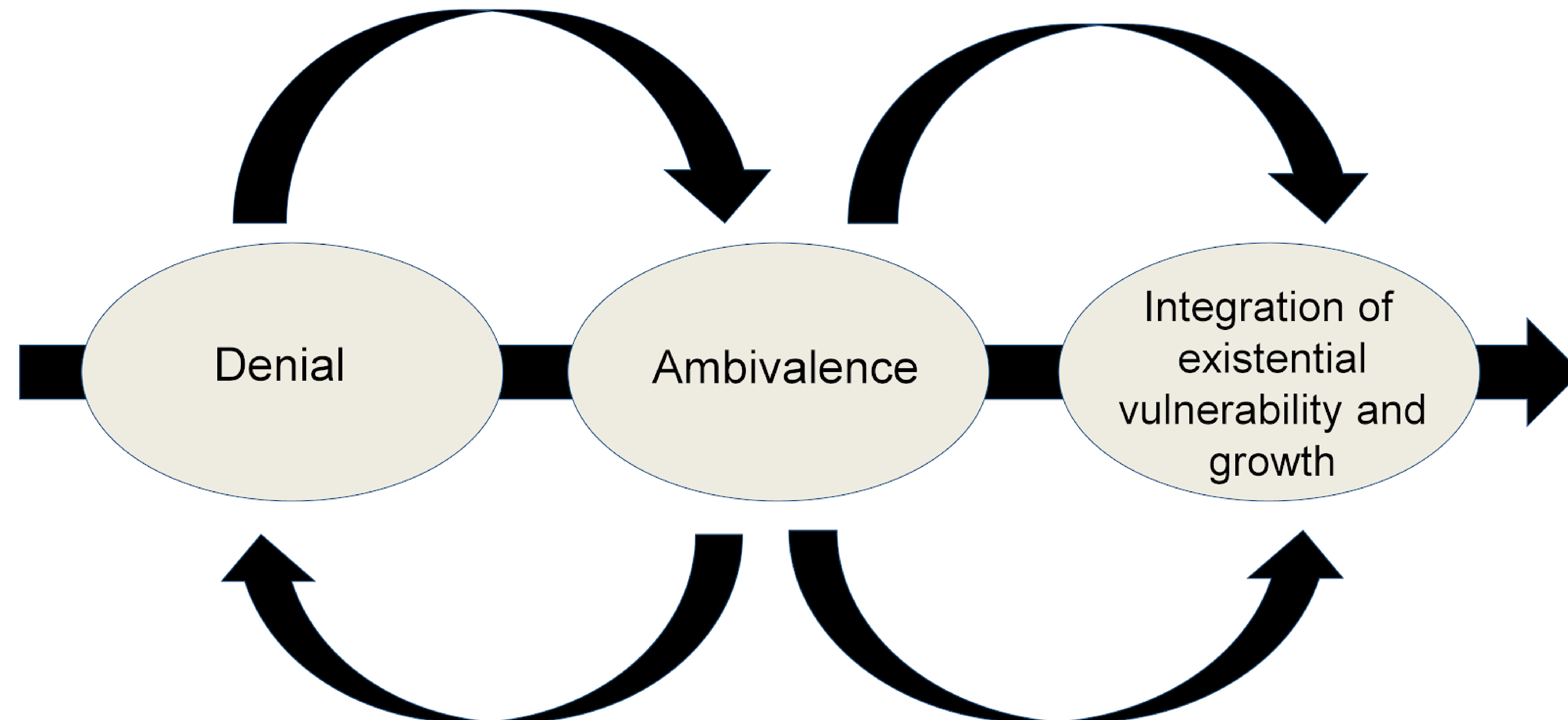
- Ageist practices occur among all health professions (e.g., Bowling, 1999; Dobbs et al., 2008)
- Health professions students demonstrate ageist attitudes and use discriminatory language (e.g., Gendron et al., 2018)
- Senior Mentoring programs expose students to older adults and healthy aging to increase their knowledge and improve attitudes

### Methodology

- *n* = 215 first year med students
- Participated in Senior Mentoring at VCU
- Asked before and after: How do you feel about your own aging?

### Data Analysis

- Data analyzed using ATLAS.ti
- First cycle coding: open, descriptive coding
- Second cycle coding: tagged codes using BPSS framework



### Other Highlights

- 78 codes total
- Negative emotion mentions pre: 317; negative emotion mentions post: 149
- Codes aligned with all pillars of BPSS though interestingly, only one code aligned with spirituality
- Most codes aligned with psychological aspects related to aging

## Exemplar Quotes

However, I still do not feel that aging is a major issue with regards to myself. While I understand the significance of the process, I feel confident in saying it does not yet affect my personal life in a significant or detrimental way.

I had never really thought of myself as "aging". As time passed, I thought that I have been growing, developing, or maturing.

I normally am not aware of my own aging because I am still relatively healthy.

Right now, I am only 26 and these issues are hopefully in the distant future...

I think aging is inevitable, and it can be beautiful, ugly, or both.

This is a tough question. For one, aging means you probably get to be a grandparent, and I think grandparents are the best kind of people – they just say whatever they want and get to be very honest with relatively little stress (hopefully) from being retired. But at the same time, I don't like aging at all.

#mixedfeelings

I look forward to the joys that all stages of life bring but the idea of one day possibly losing my independence or mental faculties is a very real fear.

I have a mix of emotions about my aging. On the one hand, I see aging as a beautiful, natural, and necessary part of...life. ...On the other hand, aging freaks me out in some ways.

The benefits I see from aging are gaining more experiences, learning new things and meeting new people. As you age, you become wiser about many different things including what you are passionate about, how best to interact with people and how to handle different situations.

I feel that aging has helped me mature and see the world in a more positive light. I can understand my own feelings and can dissect my thought processes better.

With each year I feel that I am growing and learning more and that these two things will continue throughout my life. I know that the growing and learning doesn't stop at any point.

Now when I think about aging, I am more nervous about the health consequences that arise from old age rather than the fear of appearing older or leading a lackluster life. I know that I can still have fun and lead a fulfilling life even when older and that definitely puts some of my fears to rest.

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