A Theoretical Framework for the Development of Views of One’s Own Aging

Sarah Marrs, PhD, Jenny Inker, PhD, Madeline McIntyre, BA, Leland Waters, PhD, and Tracey Gendron, PhD

How do you feel about your own aging?

**Exemplar Quotes**

- **Denial**
  - 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.

- **Ambivalence**
  - 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.

- **Integration of existential vulnerability and growth**
  - Right now, I am only 26 and these issues are hopefully in the distant future...
  - 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.

**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

This presentation is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number U1QHP28744, Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.