COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vii
Introduction 3

1. Toward a Contextual Psychology of Later Life 13
A Tripartite Understanding of Contexts in Psychological Aging: Foundational Concepts From Human Developmental Research 14
A Tripartite Contextual Approach: Lifespan Developmental Context 19
A Tripartite Contextual Approach: Social–Physical–Technological Context 27
A Tripartite Contextual Approach: Historical–Cultural Context 29
Additional Key Issues of Psychological Aging Research 29
Some Methodological Issues 31

2. Normal Cognitive Development Into Old Age and Competencies in Everyday Life 37
Theoretical Perspectives 38
Empirical Findings 42
Toward a Broader View: Cognitive Aging in Relation to Other Systems 49
The Tripartite Contextual Approach in Cognitive Aging 53
Conclusion 57
Dialogue With Dr. Walter Boot 58

3. Personality Development in Adulthood and Aging 61
Defining Personality 62
Major Theoretical Approaches to Adult Personality 63
Key Issues and Findings Regarding Adult Personality Development 70
The Tripartite Contextual Approach in Adult Personality Development 79
Conclusion 85
Dialogue With Dr. Patrick L. Hill 86

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

4. Motivation, Emotion, and Well-Being in Later Life **91**
What Are Individuals' Motivational and Emotional Needs as They Grow Old? *92*
The Need for a Multifaceted Approach to Well-Being in Later Life *95*
Empirical Findings on Well-Being in Later Life: A Multidimensional and Multidirectional View and a Paradox *98*
Explaining Paradoxes of Well-Being in Old Age: The Power of Developmental Regulation *103*
The Tripartite Contextual Approach in Motivation, Emotion, and Well-Being in Old Age *107*
Conclusion *111*
Dialogue With Dr. Susanne Scheibe *112*

5. Subjective Awareness of Aging Processes and Self-Perceptions of Aging **117**
Major Concepts in Subjective Aging Research *118*
Review of Study Findings *128*
The Tripartite Contextual Approach in Subjective Aging Research *139*
Conclusion *147*
Dialogue With Dr. Dana Kotter-Grühn *148*

6. Risks and Potentials of Adult Development and Aging: Understanding the Challenges and Opportunities of Successful Aging **153**
Developmental Challenges in Midlife Versus Old Age *154*
Opportunities of Adult Development and Aging *162*
The Tripartite Contextual Approach in Successful Aging *169*
Conclusion *177*
Dialogue With Dr. Gerben Westerhof *178*

7. Behavioral Interventions in Adult Development and Aging **181**
Enduring Questions in Behavioral Intervention Research in Aging *182*
Cognitive Interventions *183*
Psychotherapeutic Interventions *191*
Changing Older Adults' Health Behavior via Engagement in Physical Activity *196*
Intervention and Prevention: The Need for a Synergistic View *200*
How Can Change Due to Behavioral Interventions Be Maintained? *201*
The Tripartite Contextual Approach in Behavioral Intervention Research *202*
Conclusion *207*
Dialogue With Dr. Silvia Sörensen *208*

8. Putting Behavioral Aging Research in Context: A Critical Review and Remaining Challenges **211**
Can Individuals Control Their Own Development and Aging? *212*
Multidimensionality and Multidirectionality of Adult Development and Aging *213*
Plasticity of Human Aging and Its Limitations *214*
The Role of a Tripartite Contextual Approach in Adult Development and Aging *215*
A Look at Aging in the Future: The Role of Psychological Aging Research *218*

References 225
Index 269
About the Authors 283

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Introduction

Societies across the globe are experiencing a historically unprecedented growth in the population of older adults (see World Health Organization, 2015). This is a well-known fact, but what is not as well known is that global population aging is considered one of the three most serious challenges of the 21st century, along with global climate change and global energy production and conservation. The challenges accompanying global population aging are many-fold, and we strongly believe that psychological aging research has a great deal to offer in addressing these challenges. For example, conversations about the physical and mental health as well as cognitive, social, and emotional functioning of adults over the age of 85, commonly referred to as the *very old*, have gained a new level of urgency. Research showing how and to what extent the cognitive abilities of very old adults can be maintained for as long as possible deserves more attention. This need exists from an individual and a societal perspective. The findings of such research are important for improving the cognitive functioning of older adults, but they are also essential to the quality of life of these individuals because cognitive functioning is of critical importance to live independently and with a sense of purpose.

Efforts to identify effective strategies to maintain older adults' brain health and cognitive functioning also have important societal implications, like potential savings in health care costs. Evidence that supports this argument comes from research on the association between older adults' cognitive functioning and the risk of falling. For example, older adults who function at a lower cognitive level tend to have a higher risk of falling (Frieson, Tan, Ory,

http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0000185-001
The Psychology of Later Life: A Contextual Perspective, by M. Diehl and H.-W. Wahl
Copyright © 2020 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

& Smith, 2018). Falls can cause serious consequences for older adults (e.g., loss of independence, institutionalization) and for society (e.g., rising health care costs). Preventing or minimizing the risk of falling by fostering older adults' cognitive functioning may create benefits for individuals and for society. Enabling older adults to maintain a high level of cognitive functioning for as long as possible may shorten or prevent stays in assisted living or long-term care—another benefit for individuals, families, and society. Often the findings from this kind of basic research have applied and translational implications that may not be obvious at first, but they emerge when a field reaches a certain level of maturity.

Consider the domain of emotional functioning: Research on adults' emotion experiences and on the role of emotion regulation in old age has made great progress over the last 3 decades (Charles & Carstensen, 2014). Researchers have started to ask whether it is possible that affective processes are qualitatively different in nature and expression in individuals who are near the end of life (e.g., coping with pronounced multimorbidity) compared with individuals who are old but have not yet reached this stage. It also could be possible that findings from research on young, middle-aged, and active young-old adults (e.g., the knowledge about the intensity and expression of depressive symptoms) may not hold for adults of advanced old age.

These are just some of the many questions addressed by psychological aging research. The core question of this book addresses how far psychology has come regarding the scientific understanding of adult development and aging and what psychology has contributed to describing, explaining, and optimizing the human aging process. We strongly believe that psychology has made great progress in terms of the science of adult development and aging and in addressing some of the practical challenges of "graying societies." Nevertheless, we feel that more effort is needed to make a strong case for psychology's role in the science of aging. To this end, we advocate for a contextual approach to adult development and aging. We argue that adult development and aging, like human development in general, are always embedded in and influenced by the forces of the different contexts in which individuals live, work, and play. Taking these contexts explicitly into account can greatly strengthen the impact of findings by psychological aging researchers.

Our general goal with this book is to offer a new way of framing psychology's potential for helping to understand and optimize adult development and aging. We refer to this new framework as the *tripartite contextual approach* to adult development and aging. This approach asserts that the study of adult development and aging can greatly benefit from systematically and explicitly examining the influences of three major contexts:

1. the lifespan developmental context,
2. the social–physical–technological context, and
3. the historical–cultural context.

Although this framework covers a wide array of topics, we are mindful that a comprehensive coverage of all areas of psychological aging is not

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

possible within the confines of a single book. The major objective of this book will be to present the big picture of adult development and aging in the 21st century and to focus on the questions that have been raised since the beginning of research on psychological aging but that still represent enduring challenges today.

THE TRIPARTITE CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND AGING

Our framework represents a call for taking the diversity of contextual influences on individuals' adult development and aging into account when conducting research. This call for an inherent contextual approach defines the focus of this book. We examine aging individuals in their natural environments, including the myriad of influences that arise from the three major developmental contexts. The lifespan developmental context indicates that individuals' current functioning and experiences (i.e., the developmental present) are linked to past experiences (i.e., the developmental past) and are the foundation for future functioning and experiences (i.e., the developmental future). Traditionally, psychological aging researchers made the lifespan context their primary focus of inquiry.

We argue that psychological aging researchers need to be more mindful in incorporating and understanding the effects of two additional contexts: the social–physical–technological context and the historical–cultural context. Focusing on the social–physical–technological context is crucial because individuals are intricately linked to others in their different social contexts (e.g., family, school, work, civic organizations, communities). The actors in these social contexts (e.g., parents, siblings, coworkers, friends, neighbors) influence individuals' lives and development in many ways, in the short term and the long term. Yet, individuals also live in physical and technological contexts that influence their development by presenting barriers or opportunities. For example, whether middle-aged and older adults live in a community with easy access to transportation, opportunities for lifelong learning, access to health care services or in a community with none of these amenities has an effect on their quality of life and well-being. This also increasingly involves access to technologies, like those for communication or those that compensate for age-related losses (e.g., vision, hearing) and technological resources, like access to the internet or electronic health care records. To the best of our knowledge, we are among the first authors to address the technological context and developments in the digital age as being relevant to psychological aging.

The historical–cultural contexts of adult development and aging draws on observations from lifespan psychology and life-course sociology showing that historical events (e.g., economic crises, political and social movements, periods of social change) and cultural change (e.g., change in attitudes toward certain groups) have effects on individual lives. For example, Elder (1974)

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

showed how the events and consequences of the Great Depression affected the education, professional careers, and families of individuals depending on their stage of development. Similarly, findings from the Seattle Longitudinal Study of intellectual development in adulthood (Schaie, 2013) have shown significant cohort effects with regard to adults' trajectories of intellectual development. These cohort effects in adults' intellectual abilities reflect changes in educational curricula and lifestyle, but they also reflect changes in how children are raised (e.g., practices of parenting) or how information is presented and processed. In this sense, we refer to the cultural influences as those that are linked to the customs, traditions, and values of a society or community at a given point in time. The interest in historical influences in late-life development has existed in the psychology of aging for a long time (Schaie, 1965) and has recently regained a new and powerful momentum. This momentum has been fueled by the availability of an increased number of longitudinal studies that provide data to examine the historical–cultural experiences of different age cohorts in more sophisticated and conclusive ways (Drewelies, Huxhold, & Gerstorf, 2019).

Influences from these three contexts work together in complex and often not well-understood ways to shape individuals' development across the adult lifespan. Using the language of statistics, aging should be understood as the outcome of a complex three-way interaction: lifespan developmental context × social–physical–technological context × historical–cultural context. The perspective we present here assumes that adults' behavioral development and the corresponding outcomes in a given content domain (e.g., cognitive development, motivational and emotional development) are always the products of this complex three-way interaction. The major challenge for psychological aging researchers is to describe and explain how and to what extent influences from these three contexts work together to create the wide variety of outcomes that are observed in research studies and in real life.

THE TRIPARTITE CONTEXTUAL APPROACH AND OTHER EXISTING MODELS

Having made a plea for taking a strong and focused contextual stance when studying adult development and aging, we want to acknowledge that we are aware we are not the first ones to propose such a perspective. Indeed, we are mindful of the fact that other approaches exist that try to accomplish the same task, albeit from a different perspective and with a somewhat different emphasis. The purpose of the tripartite contextual approach is to complement rather than to replace these existing models, and therefore several qualifications are in order.

First and perhaps most important, the tripartite contextual approach in psychological aging research does not claim that contextual influences are the only factors driving individuals' aging process. We would be naïve if we

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

failed to acknowledge the broad range of *person-specific processes* that impact individuals' development. These person-specific processes may operate at the biological (e.g., genetic factors, connectivity in neuronal networks in the brain), social (e.g., having a small social network, risk for social isolation), and/or psychological level (e.g., age-related memory decline, reactive depressive symptoms). However, we claim that these person-specific processes, including genetic dispositions and hidden biological processes, do not exist in a vacuum and are always contextually embedded: Human aging does not happen in a Petri dish.

Second, we acknowledge that we are not the first ones to elaborate on the interactions among biological, social, and psychological factors in shaping adult development and aging. The biopsychosocial model (see Whitbourne & Whitbourne, 2017), with its specific focus on health-related processes, puts strong emphasis on the important role of social environments. We also are aware of other established contextual models, such as the bioecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1999) and the person-docility hypothesis (Lawton, 1982). Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1999) distinguished multiple levels of developmental ecologies, including microsystems (i.e., activities and interaction patterns in individuals' immediate surroundings), mesosystems (i.e., interconnections among microsystems), exosystems (i.e., contexts that affect individuals' lives but of which they are not immediately a part), and macrosystems (i.e., broader systems of culture, values, laws, customs). The objective of the bioecological systems theory is to understand the changing nature of and associations among these different levels of context in individuals over the passage of ontogenetic and historical time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1999; see also Wahl & Gerstorf, 2018). Since its introduction into the literature in 1979, this model has had a strong and lasting influence on shaping research on human development across the lifespan. However, its influence has been stronger in research on child and adolescent development than in adult development and aging.

Third, we advocate in favor of the tripartite contextual approach because we believe it presents a way of thinking about how different contextual influences work together synergistically to create the great variety of developmental outcomes (i.e., large between-person differences) that are the norm in psychological aging research. We believe that the tripartite contextual approach represents an important gestalt switch. In contrast to the dominant gestalt in the psychology of aging, which consists of a strong person-centered view, we encourage readers to engage in a systematic *switch* of this gestalt toward a contextual view of the key domains of aging, such as cognitive, personality, or motivational development (see Wahl & Gerstorf, 2018). A prerequisite for making this switch is that a sufficient body of empirical evidence has been accumulated with regard to the proposed contextual influences that illustrate their formative and lasting effects. We believe that psychological research on adult development and aging has achieved this level of maturity. Nevertheless, several qualifications of this evaluation are still in order and are discussed in the final chapter of this book.

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

ILLUSTRATING THE TRIPARTITE CONTEXTUAL APPROACH: FOCUSING ON SELECT CONTENT AREAS

Again, we are aware that it is not possible to provide a comprehensive review of adult development and aging as viewed through the tripartite contextual approach. Therefore, we have chosen a selective approach that is designed to prepare readers for their own journey of further exploration into topics of interest. We accomplish this task by addressing major psychological content areas of individuals' development across the adult lifespan. The exemplary content areas that we have selected are as follows:

- normal cognitive development and competencies in everyday life;
- personality development in adulthood and aging;
- motivation, emotion, and well-being in later life;
- subjective awareness of aging processes and self-perceptions of aging;
- risks and potentials of adult development and aging; and
- potentials of behavioral interventions in adult development and aging.

We selected these content areas for several reasons. First, psychological research in each of these areas has a considerable history and has reached a level of maturity, making it possible to illustrate the organizing framework of the tripartite contextual approach in a meaningful way. Second, at the same time, in each of these areas enduring questions and challenges continue to motivate new studies and approaches, leading to continued innovation and new insights. Third, in most of these areas the field has benefitted from the availability of several longitudinal data sets that have permitted psychologists to address questions of central importance to the study of behavioral development in adulthood and later life. This includes, but is not limited to, the close examination of the antecedents and correlates of the large between-person differences in developmental outcomes (i.e., interindividual differences) and the examination of between-person differences in within-person change trajectories under different contextual conditions (i.e., interindividual differences in intraindividual change). Fourth, we also believe that significant progress has been made in these areas in the last four decades, and this progress needs to be communicated to a wider audience and should not stay confined to the pages of peer-reviewed academic journals. Fifth, we selected these content areas because they also have great importance with regard to the translation of basic research into real-life applications, including applications that will shape the aging experiences of future cohorts of adults. Last, we believe that our selection includes several innovative elements. In several chapters, we try to integrate the traditional approaches with more recent innovative approaches in basic (e.g., in subjective aging research) and applied research (e.g., in intervention research).

When we chose the content for this book, we made a deliberate decision to not include chapters on the biological influences and the neuropsychology of aging. We made this decision in part because we are developmental psychologists by training and have only rudimentary knowledge in these areas.

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

The main reason, however, was that these content areas advance rapidly, and it is hard to keep up-to-date. Rather than doing a "half-cocked" job, we refer readers to authoritative sources in these areas, where appropriate, so that they may learn more.

Given that this book represents a collaboration between researchers from the United States and Germany, we made sure to move away from the U.S.-centric approach that exists in most textbooks, and infused chapters with findings from European and international studies. In particular, we focused on studies and findings that have been published in the top peer-reviewed journals (e.g., *Psychology and Aging*, *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*) and in highly recognized books and edited volumes, the majority of which were published in English by reputable publishers in the United States. In doing so, we hope to present the readers with a richer and more balanced view on adult development and aging as it occurs not only in the United States but also in other parts of the world. Overall, we believe that taking such an international perspective illustrates to what extent findings generated with U.S. adults generalize or fail to generalize to middle-aged and older adults in other countries.

Finally, we felt obligated to present not only the research findings of the most recent years but also findings from classic studies, which often defined the research agenda in a given content area for decades—even up to today. Readers will find references dating from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Indeed, we believe it is of critical importance for current and future scientific progress to recognize the lasting influence of theories and studies from these decades and to be mindful of the work that was done by "giants" in our field. To paraphrase Isaac Newton: We believe that we can see further if we are mindful of the history of our field, and if we acknowledge that we stand on the shoulders of giants.

We selected content areas that show how the tripartite contextual model can help us to better understand how key processes of adult development and aging unfold across the adult lifespan and how they result in a diversity of outcomes late in life. We approached this task with a strong background in lifespan psychology and with the understanding that developmental antecedents may already be relevant in early adulthood (20–39 years) and midlife (40–59 years). Furthermore, we illustrate that later adulthood is not a homogenous life stage or a homogeneous personal experience. It is of critical importance to acknowledge the great diversity that exists between individuals in their third age (young-old, 60–74 years), fourth age (old-old, 75–84 years), and fifth age (very-old, 85 years and older). Therefore, a key message of our book is that later adulthood and old age are by no means one-size-fits-all experiences but are characterized by great heterogeneity and diversity.

AUDIENCE FOR THIS BOOK

From the outset, we knew very well that we did not want to write another textbook on adult development and aging for undergraduates. There are several fine and effective undergraduate textbooks available, and there is no

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

need for us to add another book to this pile. Rather, our target audiences have some background in human development and enter their educational journey on adult development and aging at a higher level. They are first-year or more advanced graduate students in developmental and lifespan psychology, human development and family studies, or gerontological social work. However, we realized that this book might be a valuable source for other audiences: students in other areas of psychology that are affected by rapid population aging (e.g., industrial/organizational psychology, counseling psychology), professionals in health care settings serving older adults (e.g., nurses, social workers), and professionals in public health or community planning. We also expect that clinical psychologists with little background in aging research but who work with middle-aged and older adults in a variety of community settings can benefit from reflecting on their practical experiences based on the topics discussed in this book. It is our hope that such a reflection and an infusion of their work with the most recent research findings may enhance their clinical practice with middle-aged and older adults. We hope that the approach of this book is appealing to readers from these different backgrounds and provides a good starting point for them.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

Here, we provide an overview of the content presented in the chapters that follow so that readers can navigate different chapters and plan their journey of reading. We wish to note that the persons discussed at the beginning of the chapters are purely fictional. As with any journey, we believe that how we travel is more important than the destination. We wish the readers a safe, enjoyable, and productive journey.

Chapter 1 describes the tripartite contextual approach in detail, including information about the historical roots and major dimensions of the lifespan developmental context, the social–physical–technological context, and the historical–cultural context. The chapter also addresses several key issues in psychological aging research, such as the distinction between normal, pathological, and optimal aging; the distinctions between the third, fourth, and fifth ages; and specific methodological issues in aging research.

Chapter 2 examines the role of cognitive abilities in the context of everyday life and highlights the aspects of cognition that are important and essential for productive and successful adult development and aging. This chapter addresses to what extent differences in late-life cognitive competencies are the consequences of previous life experiences and lifelong behaviors; the role different social environments play with regard to facilitating or constraining the plasticity of cognitive development in adulthood and later life; and how historical and cultural/societal influences affect the development, maintenance, and trajectories of cognitive competencies across successive cohorts of adults.

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Chapter 3 adopts a multilevel approach to personality development across the adult lifespan. This approach takes the biological, social, and psychological sources of personality into account and emphasizes the role of different social contexts (e.g., family, workplace, social movements) in influencing the continuity or discontinuity of personality development across the adult lifespan. In reviewing the findings of adult personality development, this chapter focuses on major personality traits (e.g., the Big Five) and major nontrait personality characteristics (e.g., personal goals, coping mechanisms) and discusses the evidence regarding contextual influences on personality development. Guided by the tripartite contextual approach, this review includes a closer look at the evidence of cohort-specific influences on adult personality development.

Chapter 4 discusses and integrates theories from several researchers (e.g., Baltes, Brandtstädter, Carstensen, Heckhausen) about developmental regulation as a key element of successful adult development and aging. Important distinctions in the area of well-being are elaborated, and data related to the development of well-being in very old age are presented. The chapter highlights that motivational and emotional differences later in life have key precursors earlier in life, such as the interaction patterns and communication styles within families or experiences in educational and work settings; that motivation and emotion are linked to social and physical environments that hold biographical significance across individuals' entire lifespan; and that cohort-specific experiences and contexts may influence and shape the expression, experience, and regulation of motivational and emotional processes.

Chapter 5 reviews the literature on subjective aging and incorporates recent theoretical and empirical advances in this area. The discussion of new developments focuses on research in the domain of age stereotypes and age attitudes as well as more recent work on individuals' awareness of their own aging. Overall, the chapter highlights the agentic nature of self-perceptions and presents evidence showing that individuals' views of their own aging might be a distinct avenue for interventions and for optimizing successful and healthy aging.

Chapter 6 addresses a range of challenges and risks that individuals may encounter as they move across the adult lifespan, including critical life events and life transitions (e.g., retirement, age-related chronic illness, multimorbidity). As a counterperspective to these normative challenges, this chapter discusses how to define and achieve successful or optimal aging. Contributors to this ongoing discussion have asked whether the concept of successful aging may only apply to certain subpopulations of older adults and whether it may leave out adults who have grown old under less than optimal life circumstances. The tripartite contextual approach provides several insights to this discussion by putting this question and the overall concept of successful aging in perspective, specifically with regard to the effects of historical–cultural influences.

Chapter 7 focuses on the practical and intervention-related implications of the information presented in previous chapters. The most recent trends in

COPYRIGHT AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

enhancing cognitive function through cognitive training, improving mental health through psychotherapy and counseling, and increasing physical activity through motivational and cognitive behavioral interventions are discussed. This chapter examines the role of early-life factors for the efficacy and effectiveness of behavioral interventions administered in later life, the role of social–physical–technological environments in interventions, and the relevance of historical–cultural influences on intervention efforts.

Chapter 8 attempts to close the circle by putting things together in a coherent and cohesive way and by reflecting critically on gaps. The chapter returns to some of the big and enduring questions outlined in Chapter 1 and reevaluates how the tripartite contextual approach allows us to develop a perspective that can fruitfully inform future work in psychological aging research. One of the questions at the center of psychological aging research is whether it is enough to add years to life if it is uncertain what quality of life individuals might have during those years or what structures of support societies can provide. We hope that this book provides answers to this question, or, at least, points out ways in which answers might be generated.

We hope that advocating for a tripartite contextual approach initiates a discussion among researchers on how to incorporate this approach in their own work. Therefore, we invited colleagues to provide their perspective and to answer enduring questions in the field, which are included in dialogue boxes at the end of Chapters 2 through 7. The main objectives of these dialogue boxes are to return to some of the key issues within in each chapter, to offer new perspectives, and to facilitate a well-informed and critical dialogue.

Overall, we hope that this book illustrates the potentials and limitations of psychological aging research by showcasing a multitude of approaches and research findings that permit a better understanding of human aging. Together with others (see Carstensen, 2011), we believe the picture of future aging is not as negative as some people want us to believe. We strive to demonstrate the societal implications of psychological aging research, including its role in shaping aging with regard to optimal development, even in situations where frailty and the loss of major resources is impending. We argue that healthy and successful aging has become a major public health topic and psychologists play a key role in educating adults of all ages about the ways in which they can achieve this goal.