

Oakville Senior Housing

Oakville Senior Housing - Disengagement theory is the study of aging and society in gerontology. This is a controversial model which attempts to observe how individuals interact and change with society while they age. This theory was developed by social scientists Elaine Cumming and William Henry during the early 1960s. According to disengagement theory, people have a tendency to pull away from society as they age. Though this theory has its supporters, it has been disputed by many scientists in the field.

In the middle part of the-1900s, when this theory was more popular, many of its supporters thought that this was a good model to explain how individuals prepared themselves for death. Older adults gradually let go of society, supposedly preparing them to let go of life as well. The researchers suggested that this was helpful to society in allowing younger individuals to grow into different life roles. Like for instance, younger individuals are able to build up connections and networks as the older generation's networks get smaller. Also, when an older adult retires from a job it allows a younger person to enter into the workforce.

In several cases, this apparent withdrawal happens from both sides. Society might be less inclined to engage with and include older people, while at the same time, an older individual may be less likely to engage society. The scientists proposed that this was a general result of people realizing their limitations while they age, therefore making way for younger people to fill their societal roles. In disengagement theory, older people become more fragile as they age and they become less enthusiastically involved in their social circles. Instead of being voluntary, critics have pointed out, much of the disengagement tends to be forced. For example, if someone needs to move into a nursing home or assisted living facility, their social circle might decrease since their friends might not be able to visit them as frequently, or they may start to die, leaving the person with less social connections.

Depending on the society wherein an individual resides, the attitude towards the seniors and how they should be cared for differs greatly. When disengagement theory was in its early developmental stages, there was a huge shift happening in society in terms of where older individuals resided. For hundreds of years, older adults lived at home and were taken care of by their families. Then again, this was rapidly shifting towards a tendency for older people to be placed into nursing or assisted living facilities that normally separated them from their social networks and families.

Giving a reason that society can be less hospitable to the seniors is among the main criticisms of disengagement theory. It can also be used as an excuse as to the reason why it is more difficult for older people to participate in social activities, rather than society finding ways to overcome some of those barriers. For example, people who have just had a joint replacement surgery usually become isolated. This separation is usually not what the person actually wants, but rather, it becomes very difficult for them to engage in their usual activities. They might not be able to find the proper transportation or it may be extremely expensive. Additionally, the individuals who they would usually socialize with might have health problems of their own which prevent them from being social. Adults could belong to social organizations that don't accommodate their needs while they grow older.

This theory still remains quite controversial because of the sociologists, gerontologists, and elder rights activists who have seen many flaws in it. When deciding where an older individual must reside, their rights and preferences must be at the top of the list of considerations.