ESRAD

European Society for Research in Adult Development

2025 Online Conference programme

All times shown in Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). *Add 1 hour for British Summer Time. Add 2 hours for Central European Time.*

Wednesday June 11th			
		Stream 1	**Stream 2**
08.30	Pre-conference workshop	**Pre-conference workshop:** Dr Oliver C. Robinson *Qualitative methods for adult development*	
10.30	*Break*		
11.00	Session 1 - 60 mins	**Chair: Saba Sajjad** **Wellbeing and strengths across cultures** Khan. *Storytelling and Psychological Well-being in Aging Adults: A Case Study from Pakistan* Kelmendi & Hamby. *Enduring Strengths: How childhood adversity shapes adult resilience in Kosovo*	**Chair: Katja K. Hleb** **Wisdom and personal transformation** Küpers & Lucas. *Exploring Practical Transformational Wisdom in Organisation and Leadership* Kallio et al. *Holistic Wisdom metamodel (HWM): integrating multiple perspectives in wisdom research*

		Brooks et al. *Psychosocial Strengths Associated with Higher Functioning after Interpersonal Adversity in the United Kingdom and Ireland*	Spännäri. R*eligion, meaning and masculinities in transitions of men's life*
12.00	*Lunch break*		
13.00		**Chair: Clare Mehta** **ESRAD Grant winner talks** Waechter & Stuhlpfarrer. *"Making the Future a Better Place": Emerging Adults as Actors of Social Change* Bailey-Rodriguez. *Never an end in sight: Emotional labour and wellbeing in second-time working mothers in heterosexual couple relationships.*	
	Break		
14.30	Session 2 - 90 mins	**Chair: Oliver Robinson** **Developmental crisis: processes and correlates** Robinson et al. *Prevalence and reports of quarter-life crisis across 8 countries: A mixed-methods study* Sgaramella & Cenk. *Navigating Developmental Crises and Flourishing across adulthood* Millová & Khvalitska. *Locked-out and locked-in quarter-life crisis among Czech young adults* Cenk & Sgaramella. *Self-Awareness and Reappraisal as Mediators of Developmental*	**Chair: Katja K. Hleb** **Leadership development: Discussions & interactive talks** Nekrasova & George. *Developing Leaders for Global Ambiguity: The Intersection of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Action Logics* Lindhardt & Hamrin. *Cascading Organisational Effects from Inner Leader Transformation* Hamman. *Vertical Facilitation: A Method for Developmental Transformation in Business Environments*

		Crises: Implications for Flourishing and Life Satisfaction in adults' lives	

Thursday June 12th

		Stream 1	**Stream 2**
09.30	Session 4 - 90 mins	**Chair: Teresa M. Sgaramella** **Wellbeing, coping and emotions across adulthood** ~~Andrada & Fernandes. *Balancing Act: Coping Strategies for Working Student Parents in Higher Education* presentation withdrawn~~ Fundinho & Ferreira-Alves. *Navigating emotions: do social skills and verbal fluency matter in older adults' emotional recognition?* Rodríguez-Pérez et al. *"Psychological Well-Being Models for Emerging Adulthood: Finding the Right Fit"* Çobanoğlu et al. *Psychosocial Challenges of Turkish Students Abroad: A Descriptive Study on*	**Chair: Oliver Robinson** **Presentation and Discussion Session (60 mins):** *Exploring the Potential Positive Effects of Classic Psychedelic Use On Emerging Adult Development* Jake Payne

		the Intersection of Postgraduate Stressors and Wellbeing Issues in Emerging Adulthood	
11.00	***Break***		
11.30	Session 5 - 60 mins	**Chair: Marc Lucas** **Conceptions of adulthood and future perspectives in emerging / established adults** La Rosa & Commodari. *Determinants of Life Satisfaction and Future Perspectives in Italian Emerging Adults' Development: Insights from an Empirical Study* Mitra and Arnett. *Conceptions of Adulthood in India*. Mehta et al. *Faking it and Figuring it out: Established Adults' Sense of Adulthood*	**Chair: Garry Nicholson** **Health and resilience in later adulthood** Hollis-Sawyer. *Incomplete Healthcare for Older Women: "Double Jeopardy" Discrimination in Care* Nicholson. *Simple Lines, Solid Outcomes: The Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Adult Community Art Classes* Finegan et al. *Resilience and Wellbeing in Older Age through an Age Friendly University – A Case Study*
12.30	***Lunch break***		
13.30	Session 6 - Keynote talk	**Chair: Jonathan Reams** **Keynote Talk** Theo Dawson *From theory to practice: Cultivating minds that are ready for almost anything*	
14:30	*break*		
15.00	Session 7 - 90 mins	**Chair: Clare M. Mehta** **Women and reproductive development**	**Chair: Katja K. Hleb** **Leadership in context**

		Fonseca et al. *Exploring women's mental health and the factors associated with flourishing during menopause* Young et al. *"From Pandora to Empowerment": The reproductive storytelling of three graduate students at Columbia University* Athan & Sholomon. *Reproductive Identity Development: From If, When, How… to Who* Singh. *Navigating Midlife Transitions: Psychological and Sleep-Related correlates of Perimenopause in Indian Women*	Andree et al. *Integrating Leader and Leadership Development: Exploring Complementary Frameworks Approach to Vertical Growth* Ouellette-Schramm, J (Walden University). *Educational Leaders Navigating Conflict: Preliminary Developmental Findings Using Two Measures* Kjellström & DeLauer. *Fostering Collaboration in Multi-Stakeholder Change: Dual Leadership Approaches in Coproduction* Cavallaro & Fram. *How Marginalized Journeys Prompt Adult Development: LGBTQ+ leaders*
break			
17.00 to 18.30		**Chair: Oliver Robinson** *Evening session:* **Experiential Yoga Nidra workshop** Grainne McAnallen. Yoga Nidra as a tool to support the development of the 21st century mind *NB. Yoga Nidra is a form of meditation aimed at accessing states of consciousness in between waking and sleeping*	

Friday June 13th			
		Stream 1	**Stream 2**
09.30	Session 8 - 90 mins	**Chair: Salla Ahola** **Higher education and development** ~~Dutta et al. *Exploring the role of SDT-based internships in supporting psychology students' transition*~~ Güçlü et al. *An Examination of the Predictors of Study Engagement among University Students* Molyn. *Benefits of Coaching Higher Education Students*	**Chair: Nick Shannon** **Dialectical thinking & dialectical methods** Reams and Andersson. *A Dialectical Method for Studying the Development of Emotional Resilience* Palmo et al. *Coping with Climate Change Through Dialectical and Black-And-White thinking: Associations with Climate-Friendly Behavior Among Early Emerging Adults* Belolutskaya. *Structural-dialectical approach to the development of creative thinking through the reflection on non-objective (non-representational) art*
11.00	break		
11.30	Session 9 - 60 mins	**Chair: Marianne Markowski** **Different forms of learning in later life to support well-being** Balyasnikova et al. *Learning in the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing: Insights from Canada and the UK*	**Chair: Nick Shannon** **Mechanisms and processes in real-world reasoning** Cavallaro. *Problem-Based Learning to Prompt Vertical Development* Stammberger & Mascolo. *How Distance Brings Us*

		Markowski et al. *The uses of peer learning in later life – an update on the pre-liminary results of a systematic review* Miles. *Self-directed learning in later life: an autoethnographic sketch*	*Closer to Solutions: Reasoning for Wisdom in Everyday Life.* Madl. *Causal Discovery in Adult Development: Identifying Effective Interventions by Developmental Stage*
12.30	*Lunch break*		
13.30	Session 10 - 60 mins	**Chair: Clare M. Mehta** **Transitions and Stages in Older Adulthood** Yarwood et al. *Alone time in the golden age: Pre-retiree and retiree experiences of solitude* Kokko & Emmi Reinilä. *The beginning of late adulthood: A phase of losses or increasing well-being?* Wichers. *Stages of Consciousness Development in Ageing - from Prepersonal to Transpersonal*	**Chair: Nick Shannon** **Stage development and contemplative practices** Angerer & Rae. *Lectical Assessments & Stages of Transcendental Pluralism: An Attempt in Finding Correlations* Ooms. *The Neurophenomenology of Stages: A QEEG Case Study on the Stages of Transcendental Pluralism* Murray. *Mechanisms of Growth: Decentering, Contemplative Practice, and the Reconstruction of Meaning in Adulthood*
14:30	*break*		
15.00		**Chair and Interviewer: Oliver Robinson** **Keynote Interview** Jeff Arnett *Building resilience in emerging adults and the future of adult development*	
16.15		**Conference plenary session**	

Abstracts

Wednesday 11th June

Wednesday 11th, 11am Stream 1: Wellbeing and strengths across cultures

Khan, A.M. ***Storytelling and Psychological Well-being in Aging Adults: A Case Study from Pakistan***

Background and Aim: The process of aging is often accompanied by shifts in psychological well-being, cognitive engagement, and social identity. Theoretical perspectives in narrative psychology suggest that storytelling functions as a cognitive and emotional mechanism that allows individuals to construct meaning, reinforce identity, and process past experiences (Bruner,1990). Similarly, Erikson's theory of psychosocial development highlights that older adults seek coherence and legacy-building through storytelling (Erikson, 1950).

Within the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, where oral traditions play a significant role in knowledge transmission and identity formation, storytelling presents a unique lens for examining the emotional and cognitive experiences of aging adults. Our study explores: • How storytelling contributes to psychological well-being in older adults; • How different age groups (60–74 vs. 75+) engage with storytelling as a resilience-building tool; • How gender influences storytelling styles, emotional expression, and social connection.

Method:

(a) Theoretical Framework: Our study is grounded by:
- Narrative Psychology (Bruner, 1990) – Exploring storytelling as a cognitive and emotional structuring process.
- Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory (1950) – Analyzing how storytelling serves identity consolidation in later adulthood.
- Gender and Aging Theories – Examining how cultural and social norms shape the storytelling experiences of men and women.

(b) Data Collection: A qualitative case study conducted with 30 aging adults (10 men, 10 women) from urban settings (Lahore City) in Pakistan. Participants were divided into two age groups (60-69 years and over 70 years). Data collection methods included:
- Semi-structured interviews to explore personal narratives, emotional expression, and identity construction.
- Guided storytelling sessions to observe memory recall, narrative depth, and emotional engagement.
- Participant observations to analyze social interaction and expressive behavior.

(c) Data Analysis: Our findings were analyzed using:
- Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify dominant storytelling patterns.
- Comparative Analysis to evaluate variations across age and gender groups.
- Coding Framework focusing on memory recall, emotional processing, identity formation, and social bonding.

Results:

Our findings suggested that storytelling serves as a psychological resource for aging adults, with notable differences across age and gender. Younger-old adults (60-69 years) engaged in storytelling as a means of active self-definition, often recalling structured and detailed memories. In contrast, older-old adults (over 70 years) exhibited a more reflective and nostalgic storytelling style, emphasizing wisdom and legacy. Gender variations were also observed; women tended to use

storytelling as a relational tool, focusing on emotional expression and social bonding, while men approached it as a structured means of transmitting knowledge and life experiences. These differences highlight the role of storytelling in maintaining identity, fostering resilience, and enhancing well-being in later life. Our study identified that younger-old adults (60-69 Years) engaged in storytelling as a process of active self-definition, whereas older-old adults (Over 70 Years) used storytelling primarily for reflection and meaning-making. Gender differences further revealed that women utilized storytelling as a relational tool for emotional connection, while men approached storytelling as a structured means of passing down wisdom and experiences.

Discussion and Implications:

Our findings reinforce theoretical perspectives that position storytelling as a psychologically significant mechanism for aging individuals. The evidence suggests that storytelling not only supports cognitive and emotional well-being but also serves as a tool for identity continuity and resilience-building. The study aligns with narrative psychology's assertion that identity construction evolves with aging (Bruner, 1990). Younger-old adults actively shaped narratives for self-definition, whereas older-old adults engaged in legacy-oriented storytelling, emphasizing wisdom and life reflection. The findings support gender and aging theories, indicating that women prioritize emotional connections through storytelling, whereas men focus on structured, event-driven narratives. These variations reflect broader cultural norms surrounding emotional expressivity and gendered socialization in Pakistan. The study highlights the role of oral traditions in Pakistani society

Kelmendi, K & Hamby, S. ***Enduring Strengths: How childhood adversity shapes adult resilience in Kosovo***

Background: Kosovo, as a post-conflict country, has a history marked by significant trauma and violence. While previous research has predominantly concentrated on the aftermath of war and its effects, there remains to be a lack of knowledge about individuals who flourish despite adversity, especially in the context of the resilience portfolio model, particularly in low and middle-income countries. The Resilience Portfolio Model is a framework grounded in a strengths-based approach, offering a cohesive perspective on the processes and protective factors that foster resilience in individuals who have faced violence and various other challenges.

Aim: This research employs the resilience portfolio model to investigate the psychological and social assets that foster resilience in Kosovo's adult population. Specifically, it investigates how adversities, along with a spectrum of psychological and social strengths, influence individuals' subjective well-being and posttraumatic growth.

Method: A sample of 689 adults aged 18 to 60 (average age 25.8, SD = 9.04) was recruited online via the snowball technique. They completed a survey on trauma symptoms, victimization, other adversities, psychological and social strengths, subjective well-being, and posttraumatic growth.

Results: Findings from the study show that 92% experienced general victimization and 40% were exposed to parental violence. Hierarchical regressions indicated that poly-strengths, sense of purpose, optimism, and religious meaning-making contributed to posttraumatic growth in a model with all strengths and controlling for victimization, educational level, employment status, age, and gender (total R2 = .39). Similarly, poly-strengths, sense of purpose, optimism, and psychological endurance contributed to subjective well- being, controlling for victimization, educational level, employment status, age, and gender (total R2 = .34).

Discussion and Implications: Findings from this highly victimized sample show that several strengths seem promising in promoting resilience. Notably, intervention and prevention programs should include activities related to regulatory strengths (endurance and compassion), interpersonal strengths (compassion), and meaning-making strengths (purpose and religious meaning-making).

Brooks, M. et al. ***Psychosocial Strengths Associated with Higher Functioning after Interpersonal Adversity in the United Kingdom and Ireland***

Background and Aim: Positive psychology has identified correlates of resilience, but more work is needed to identify key strengths that aid recovery from interpersonal adversity in different cultural settings. This study assessed the contribution of 24 strengths from the Values in Action (VIA) survey, alongside five other measures of strengths identified from resilience research, to identify the strengths that show most promise for healing after adversity.

Method: Adults (N = 1,440, 66% female, 53% aged under 35 years old, 87% White) from the U.K. and Ireland completed the online VIA survey assessing 24 strengths, questions on five other psychosocial strengths (eco-connections, mindfulness, psychological endurance, sense of purpose, social support), adversities (interpersonal victimisation, institutional betrayal), and current functioning (subjective wellbeing, posttraumatic growth, health-related quality of life). Data were analysed using bivariate correlations and blockwise logistic regressions, controlling for demographics (age, gender, income) and adversities.

Results: Participants reported high rates of victimisation which generally correlated with poorer functioning. Strengths accounted for greater proportions of variance in all three outcomes compared to adversities. Hope and zest were significantly and positively associated with all three outcomes. Sense of purpose, gratitude, social support, mindfulness, psychological endurance, spirituality, and self-regulation were related to at least one outcome. Humour, spirituality, and leadership were associated with worse functioning in some analyses.

Discussion and Implications: Some strengths are more helpful than others for overcoming adversity. Strengths such as hope and zest could serve as useful targets for intervention to enhance wellbeing in adults with histories of interpersonal victimisation. Further work is needed to understand the complexities of strengths on resilience in global contexts.

Wednesday 11th, 11am Stream 2: Wisdom and personal transformation

Küpers, W. & Lucas, M. ***Exploring Practical Transformational Wisdom in Organisation and Leadership***

Description:

The rapidly evolving societal and business landscape requires critical and innovative approaches to leadership and organisation. Research on practical wisdom, offers promising discourse and framework for understanding how leaders can navigate complexity in contemporary world. The following research / book proposal aims at empirically investigating the role of practical and transformational wisdom in organisation and leadership within the German-speaking business world, particularly in relation to 'holocratic' structures and processes as well as the concept of so-called 'shadow organisations' (Kuehl, 2023). Furthermore, this study will consider how developmental psychology, specifically post-traumatic growth, contributes to the maturation and wisdom of leaders. The concept and practice of holocracy challenges traditional paradigms by introducing self-managed teams and fluid structures. While promising, its implementation raises questions about

leadership roles, power dynamics, and the integration of shadow organisation principles, as posited by Günter Kühl (2023). Kühl's research on shadow organisations uncovers the informal networks and hidden dynamics that influence formal structures and decision-making processes.Developmental psychology offers insights into how individuals grow and mature in response to challenges. The concept of post-traumatic growth, wherein individuals learn and develop wisdom through adversity, aligns with the notion that suffering can lead to deeper insights and more effective leadership.

Research Objectives

- To examine the perception, understanding and applicability/application of practical wisdom in organisational leadership in the German-speaking business context.
- To assess the implementation and challenges of holocracy (as proto-wise form of organising) and how it affects traditional leadership roles (in relation to practical wisdom).
- To explore the role of shadow organisation and its interplay with formal structures and official processes.
- To investigate the developmental aspects of wisdom, with a focus on post-traumatic growth, especially among leaders (and effects on follower/employees and stakeholder).

Research Questions

1. How do leaders in the German-speaking world perceive, construct/conceptualize and apply (or not and why not) practical wisdom in their organisations?
2. What are the experiences and challenges faced in implementing holocratic structures (as proto-wise organisation), and what impact do they have on leadership roles and effects on followers/employees and stakeholder?
3. What are and how do shadow organisations interact with or counterbalance formal organisational structures?
4. In what ways does post-traumatic growth contribute to the development of practical wisdom among business leaders, employees and stakeholder?

Methodology

This study will employ a *mixed-methods* approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

Quantitative Component: A *survey* will be conducted among leaders in German-speaking businesses to measure the extent and perception of practical wisdom, readiness for holocratic implementation, and experiences of post-traumatic growth. Standardized instruments, such as the Wisdom Development Scale (WDS) and the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) will be utilized.

Qualitative Component: In-depth *interviews* and focus groups with selected business leaders will provide nuanced insights into organisational dynamics, the operation of shadow organisations, and personal narratives of growth through adversity. Additionally, *case studies* of companies that have adopted holocracy will be analysed to identify success factors and challenges.

Integral Research Design

The research will be structured to ensure an integral understanding of the phenomena:

Phase 1: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework Development

- Comprehensive review of existing literature on practical wisdom, holocracy, shadow organisations, and developmental psychology.
- Development of a theoretical framework integrating these concepts.
- Devepment of Hypothesis and Propositions

Phase 2: Quantitative Survey (or Phase 3?)

- Design and distribution of a survey to a broad sample of German-speaking business leaders to gather baseline data.

Phase 3: Qualitative Exploration (or Phase 2?)

- Conduct in-depth interviews and focus groups to explore themes identified in the survey data.
- Case study analysis of organisations implementing holocracy.

Phase 4: Integration and Analysis

- Synthesis of qualitative and quantitative findings to provide a holistic understanding of the research questions.
- Development of a model (integral framework) for practical and transformative wisdom in the context of evolving organisational structures.

Significance and Expected Outcomes

This research will contribute to the understanding of practical transformative wisdom in contemporary organisational and leadership settings, providing insights for organisations and leaders in the German-speaking world. By integrating perspectives on holocracy, shadow organisations, and psychological development, the study aims to offer actionable strategies for fostering practical, transformative wisdom in organisation and leadership, enhancing organisational effectiveness and responsibilities, while also supporting personal and interpersonal growth. This research stands to provide valuable insights into the dynamic interplay of practical transformative wisdom, organisational structures, and leadership development. By embracing a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach, the study will contribute to both academic discourse and practical implementation strategies, fostering wiser and more resilient organisational and leadership cultures and practices in the German-speaking business world.

Kallio, E. et al. ***Holistic Wisdom meta model (HWM): integrating multiple perspectives in wisdom research***

Background and Aim:

We introduce the Holistic Wisdom Model (HWM) which synthesizes insights from 19 previous models, offering a fresh perspective on the current discourse surrounding wisdom. The HWM is grounded in a holistic phenomenological-existential ontological view of the human being, providing a philosophically robust definition of human potential applicable to the concept of wisdom.

Method and Results:

The HWM comprises four main components: (1) Cognitive-, (2) Affective-Social-, (3) Ethical-Existential-, and (4) Action Dimensions. The individual acts as the coordinator across these dimensions. A key feature is the dynamic interplay between intrapersonal and contextual polarities, visualized as a bidirectional dialectical loop.

Discussion:

Ongoing empirical research based on this model includes studies on using Socratic dialogue (banen et al.,submitted) and project-based sustainability training (Lähteenkorva et al., accepted) as part of university education. The conceptual four dimensional model has also been verified in higher education context (Tynjälä, et al., submitted). Furthermore, the experiences of the experts on how they have learned to become wiser as they have progressed to become better at solving wicked problems have also been explored (Virolainen et al., 2024)

Spännäri, J. R*eligion, meaning and masculinities in transitions of men's life*

Background and Aim:

For many individuals, meaning-making and reflections of existential meaning, including in transitions of life, happen in the context of lived religion. Approaching lived religion requires a shift of perspective towards everyday sociology, away from 'religion-as-prescribed' by institutions and towards 'religion-as-practiced' by individuals. However, contemporary studies on lived and/or everyday religion have given far more space to women's experience of religion compared to men – both due to researchers' aims, but it also cultures of masculinity related to religion and/or participating in research. As a result, male voices are not heard, and lived religion among men remains largely unnoticed. Previous studies have also highlighted the need to explore the role and meaning of religion beyond a mere coping strategy: as a framework for personal growth and existential meaning-making. This paper aims to present an empirical, ethnographic and collaborative approach to religion, meaning and masculinities in transitions on men's life.

Approach:

The paper is based on an ongoing research project, examining the role and meaning of religion amongst men in four different life transitions: becoming a parent, retiring from work and the slow transition of ageing, entering military service and recovering from addictions. Our question is, how do the roles and meanings of religion and masculinity change in these life situations?

Discussion and Implications:

By presenting the approach and preliminary insights from the study, this paper sheds light onto this lesser known social phenomenon, novel co-research methodologies applied to create shared understanding on the related phenomena and the men's experiences, and furthermore, adds a novel point of view onto the role of religion in life's transitions.

Wednesday 11th, 13:00: ESRAD Grant winner talks

Waechter, N. et al. ***"Making the Future a Better Place": Emerging Adults as Actors of Social Change***

Background and Aim:

Empirical studies on emerging adults (e.g., Bogueva et al., 2024) suggest that multiple global crises have made them increasingly worried about their personal as well as the global future. Based on the theoretical approach of young people's agency (Nico and Caetano, 2021), our research investigates whether emerging adults see themselves as "actors of social change" (Pohl et al., 2011) by exploring their ideas on how they can "make the future a better place".

Method:

Data was collected in the frame of the "Global Gen Z Study" by conducting a large-scale value survey carried out with members of Generation Z aged 18-26 in 2022 in 31 countries worldwide (Seemiller and Grace, 2024). In our proposed presentation we will focus on the open survey question "How can your generation make the future a better place?" and present the analysis of short text answers from N=571 Austrian emerging adults. For data analysis we have conducted thematic analysis on brief texts, applying the structured tabular approach (ST-TA) (Robinson, 2022).

Results:

The topics requiring attention and action, as addressed by the surveyed emerging adults, range from climate change and peace to economic issues (capitalism, poverty) and social issues (equal rights, racism, sexism, homophobia). Their suggestions regarding the kind of action that should be taken by their generation cover generating and exchanging knowledge, individual actions (e.g., change of personal consumer behaviors, not having children), and political actions (e.g., protesting, boycotting, voting).

Discussion and Implications:

Gen Z members express the necessity and their willingness to take action and "to take their future in their hands" but they seem to put more emphasis on individual than political action. The results strengthen an understanding of young people as actors of social change, however, their focus on individual action is concerning and needs to be addressed in more detail in future research.

Bailey-Rodriguez, D. ***Never an end in sight: Emotional labour and wellbeing in second-time working mothers in heterosexual couple relationships.***

Background and Aim:

Couple relationships significantly impact mental wellbeing, influencing partners' health, life satisfaction, and their children's wellbeing. Parenthood is complex and challenging, often leading to changes in childcare and domestic responsibilities, and decreased relationship satisfaction, with additional strains in second-time parenthood. Women disproportionately bear unpaid domestic and care work and emotional labour, with working women experiencing greater pressures and lower work productivity and satisfaction compared to men. These inequities negatively affect women's mental health and relationship satisfaction. This study aims to investigate the interplay between societal norms, gendered experiences of emotional labour, and their impact on wellbeing among second-time working mothers in cohabiting heterosexual relationships.

Method:

This paper focuses on the first part of a qualitatively-driven mixed methods design, where 106 second-time working mothers in heterosexual couple relationships took part in a Story Completion qualitative survey. Participants completed two stories after being presented with hypothetical story stems based on emotional labour and working motherhood in a couple relationship setting. Data were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis to generate patterns of meaning.

Results:

The analysis identified key themes: role juggling, where mothers manage multiple roles and responsibilities; emotional strain, with feelings of exhaustion, resentment, loss of self-identity and job-related worries; mental load, with mothers taking on the primary responsibility for planning and organising; and shared responsibilities, with a positive impact to mothers' wellbeing and to the relationship when fathers share childcare and domestic labour.

Discussion and Implications:

The findings highlight the impact of the emotional labour performed by mothers on their wellbeing, and the benefits of equitable distribution of household tasks and childcare, which is essential for addressing gendered challenges and promoting healthier relationships and wellbeing. The findings can help to inform policies and support programmes aimed at promoting gender equality in parenting roles and relationship dynamics.

Wednesday 11th, 14:30 Stream 1: Developmental crisis: processes and correlates

Robinson, O.C. et al. ***Prevalence and reports of quarter-life crisis across 8 countries: A mixed-methods study***

Background and Aim

The three research questions that directed the inquiry were as follows:

1) What is the prevalence of self-reported developmental crisis episodes in emerging adults across the UK, Greece, Czechia, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Brazil?

2) What emotions and events are conveyed within brief written descriptions of these crisis episodes?

3) How do the written emotions and events compare in content and frequency across the participating countries?

Method:

We assessed prevalence and brief written descriptions of early adult crisis in 18–29-year-olds from eight countries (UK, Greece, Czechia, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Brazil), with a total sample of N=2247.

Results:

Crisis prevalence rates found ranged from 40% to 77% per country. Thematic analysis of descriptions of crisis elicited external and internal crisis features. With regards to external features, the most prevalent were career transition, financial difficulties, studying-based stress and struggle, and family difficulties. Internal features that were most prevalent were feeling fearful/anxious/worried, negative self-evaluation, feeling sad/down, and feelings of confusion/uncertainty.

Discussion and Implications:

In summary, the implications of the current research are that the need for such support services to young adults extends across all the countries studied, and quite possibly beyond. Developing and sharing support strategies and resources across countries, while modifying such services to support cultural differences, may allow for the development of empirically supported and cross-culturally valid services for helping young adults through this highly challenging part of the lifespan that can support young adults around the world.

Sgaramella, T.M. & Cenk, E. ***Navigating Developmental Crises and Flourishing across adulthood***

Background and Aim:

Developmental crises are pivotal periods of psychological adjustment that impact well-being. Studies show that future time perspective (FTP) leads to higher well-being through emotion regulation strategies (Ramsey and Gentzler 2014; Balzarotti et al. 2016).

This study investigates the prevalence and patterns of the experiences of developmental crisis (DC) in young and middle adults and their contribution of specific components on wellbeing. It also examines how an emotion regulation strategy and future time perspective influence the relationship between the experience of developmental crisis and flourishing, considered as the optimal wellbeing experience.

Method:

Two hundred adults completed the Developmental Crisis Questionnaire (Petrov et al., 2022), the Future Time Perspective Scale (Webster, 2011), the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003), and the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010).

Results:

Analyses show that the prevalence and relevance of components in developmental crises differ in the two groups, as well as their contribution to flourishing. The differential and specific role of the DC components also emerged with the experience of Disconnection and Distress (D&D), and Lack of Clarity and Control (LC&C) significantly reducing flourishing. Additionally, results from mediation analyses show that cognitive reappraisal and future time perspective mitigate the negative effects of D&D and LCC on flourishing. Individuals who engage in cognitive reappraisal are more likely to maintain a strong future time perspective, which in turn fosters well-being despite the experience of developmental crisis. Both LCC and D&D decrease cognitive reappraisal, which subsequently lower future time perspective, thereby decreasing flourishing.

Discussion and implications:

Besides highlighting the relevance of addressing the developmental crisis experience in adults of different ages and the specificity of the patterns, the study underscores the role of cognitive reappraisal and future time perspective as psychological resources meaningful in promoting well-being in adults experiencing developmental crises. Strengthening these cognitive mechanisms may serve as an effective intervention strategy.

Millová, K. & Khvalitska, A. ***Locked-out and locked-in quarter-life crisis among Czech young adults***

Background and Aim:

The paper explores the quarter-life crisis, characterised by a re-evaluation of identity, life direction, and decisions, which can manifest during young adulthood. We draw on O. C. Robinson's model, which describes two types of crisis: the "locked-out" crisis, typically occurring in the early stages of young adulthood, and the "locked-in" crisis, more common in its later stages. The primary objective was to assess the prevalence of the quarter-life crisis and examine the differences in psychosocial functioning between two age groups (18–29 and 30–40) with respect to their experience of the crisis.

Method:

The sample comprised 514 people between 18 and 29 years of age of age and 152 between 30 and 40 years (73.9% female), who completed an online questionnaire battery. These assessed the experience of the quarter-life crisis (DCQ-12), life satisfaction (SWLS), social support (MOS), meaning in life (MLQ), perceived stress (PSS), and negative emotionality (PHQ-9; anxiety and depression).

Results:

The findings revealed that the quarter-life crisis was more prevalent among participants aged 18 to 29 (33.7%) compared to those aged 30 to 40 (18.4%). When comparing the psychosocial functioning of the two age groups based on the presence or absence of the crisis, people aged 18–29 experiencing the crisis reported lower life satisfaction, higher stress, and greater levels of anxiety. In contrast, participants aged 30–40 differed only in anxiety levels, which were higher among those experiencing the crisis.

Discussion and Implications:

People (in)experiencing a crisis in their twenties differed more from one another than those in their thirties. This may be due to the different types of quarter-life crisis but also to their growing life experiences.

Cenk, E. & Sgaramella, T.M. ***Self-Awareness and Reappraisal as Mediators of Developmental Crises: Implications for Flourishing and Life Satisfaction in adults' lives***

Background and Aim:

Developmental crises play a crucial role in adult growth (Erikson, 1968; Levinson, 1986). These periods of instability can disrupt life structures, leading to self-reflection, identity changes, and emotional distress, but they can also foster personal growth (Robinson et al., 2013; Robinson & Stell, 2015). Three key dimensions help understand these crises: Disconnection and Distress, Lack of Clarity and Control, and Transition and Turning Point (Petrov et al., 2022). This study examines how transitional and crisis experiences affect well-being, specifically flourishing and life satisfaction, while exploring the mediating roles of self-awareness and reappraisal.

Method:

A sample of 215 participants completed the Developmental Crisis Questionnaire (Petrov et al., 2022), the Emotional Regulation Scale (Gross & John, 2003), the SSIS SEL Brief Scales (Gresham & Elliott, 2017), and both the Flourishing and Satisfaction Scales (Diener et al., 1985, 2010). A serial mediation analysis was conducted to examine direct and indirect effects.

Results:

Results indicate that transition and turning points do not significantly predict flourishing or life satisfaction, nor do they have indirect effects via self-awareness or reappraisal. In contrast, disconnection and distress negatively impact both flourishing and life satisfaction, both directly and indirectly. Moreover, reappraisal mediates the effects of disconnection and distress on both outcome whereas self-awareness significantly mediates flourishing but does not significantly mediate life satisfaction. Similarly, a lack of clarity and control negatively influences flourishing both directly and indirectly by reducing self-awareness and reappraisal, though its mediation effects on life satisfaction are not significant.

Discussion and Implications:

These findings suggest that reappraisal and self-awareness serve as partial buffers against distress in relation to flourishing, while their impact on life satisfaction is weaker. This highlights the role of self-awareness and reappraisal in enhancing flourishing, helping to mitigate the negative effects of distress and lack of control in adults experiencing developmental crises and life transitions.

Wednesday 11th, 14:30 Stream 2: Leadership development: Discussions & interactive talks

Nekrasova, A. & George, M. ***Developing Leaders for Global Ambiguity: The Intersection of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Action Logics***

Background and Aim:

This exploratory workshop builds upon dissertation research examining the interplay of three critical domains in leadership development: Cultural Intelligence (CQ), focusing on motivational, strategic and action components in intercultural interactions; Torbert's developmental Action Logics, which illuminate how different developmental stages approach complexity navigation; and the management of ambiguity in multicultural contexts. While these domains have traditionally been studied in isolation, their intersection offers promising insights into how leaders perceive, experience, and respond across developmental and

cultural boundaries. We aim to explore how leaders' developmental capacity interfaces with their cultural intelligence, particularly in situations of high ambiguity, hypothesizing that this integration may enhance leadership outcomes in multicultural contexts.

Method: Participants will explore connections between CQ, Action Logics, and ambiguity through interactive discussion and experiential exercises. The workshop will facilitate collaborative inquiry into how these domains interact in leadership development and generate insights about potential research directions

Results / Expected Outcomes: We aim to clarify theoretical connections between these frameworks, identify developmental pathways for enhancing multicultural leadership capacity, and generate hypotheses about integrated capabilities' influence on leadership outcomes.

Discussion and Implications: This work addresses the conference theme by examining how leaders develop sophisticated capabilities for global leadership. Integrating CQ with developmental theory offers promising directions for understanding navigation of elevated ambiguity arising from developmental and multicultural complexity. Implications span leadership development, adult development theory, and organizational practice, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in global leadership effectiveness

Lindhardt, N. & Hamrin, K. *Cascading Organisational Effects from Inner Leader Transformation*

Background and Aim
The Action Research paper " Cascading Organisational Effects from Inner Leader Transformation" published in ESRAD research digest jan 2025, highlights an applied process where adult development has been a central part of immersive leader development in a large organisation. The measured, outcomes are remarkable. The aim with this lecture is to spread the key insights enabling the depth of
this transformation. And create awareness of the process, and facilitation leading to these results. Sharing validated practices that hold the capacity to make this planet a better, more loving place, is dear to us.

Method (if theoretical paper, describe theoretical approach instead)
The method of the study :To facilitate the inner transformation, a 9 months, immersive, facilitated leader development program was run. Cohorts of 15 were guided into themselves, and into the relational, complex dynamics of organisational systems. Throughout the program all attendees had the opportunity to submit testimonials, as part of the continuous program evaluation. These testimonials were collected and presented in selection. Individual effects were assessed using attendee surveys. The method of measurement was self assessments, in which the attendee made an estimate of how a range of leader parameters have evolved, or not, over the course of the program up until 4 months and 16 months after the program. That is, the collected data reflects the leader's self experienced shift in the assessed leader capabilities. Base reference value was at program start. The data was collected, and presented as is.

The parameters assessed are: Self awareness; Leadership Confidence; Skills in approaching challenges; Ability to hold multiple perspectives; Ability to shape organisational coherence; Ability to see what is going on in the system; Own sense of agency; Overall life satisfaction (all aspects of life)

Organisational effects were assessed by monitoring operational efficiency
parameters using the organisation's own KPIs. Effects were assessed both within and outside the leaders' area of responsibility. Different parts of this large organsiation use different ways to monitor their operational efficiency, and each leader collected the KPIs relevant for each metric. In the cases hard KPIs were

missing, or not adequate for the metric requested, the Leader was asked to make a qualified estimate. Each leader then reported how the assessed operational efficiency parameters had developed over the course of the program up until 4 months after and 16 months after program end. Base reference value was at program start.

The metrics reported within the leaders area of responsibility are:
Collaboration; Organisational Output/Outcomes; Accountability in organisation; Employee engagement; Decision/Direction Accuracy; Organisational Creativity/Problem Solving; Organisational delivery precision & quality

The metrics reported outside the leaders area of responsibility are:
Cross Organisational Collaboration; Cross Organisational Output/Outcomes; Cross Organisational Accountability; Cross Organisational Employee engagement Cross Organisational Decision/Direction Accuracy; Cross Organisational Creativity/Problem Solving; Cross Organisational delivery precision & quality

Results

Self Assessed Leader Capabilities	Increase in % *
Self awareness 90Leadership Confidence.	75
Skills in approaching challenges	90,75
Ability to hold multiple perspectives	87,5
Ability to shape organisational coherence	53,75
Ability to see what is going on in the system	76,25
Own sense of agency	51,25
Overall life satisfaction (all aspects of life)	75

Operational Efficiency Metrics Within the Leader's Area of Responsibility	
Collaboration	57,5
Organisational Output/Outcomes	51,25
Accountability in organisation	51,25
Employee engagement	45,25
Decision/Direction Accuracy	36,25
Organisational Creativity/Problem Solving	42,75
Organisational delivery precision & quality	30

Operational Efficiency Metrics Across Areas of Competence / Between Organisational Silos/Units	
Cross Organisational Collaboration	41,25
Cross Organisational Output/Outcomes	24,5

Cross Organisational Accountability	25
Cross Organisational Employee engagement	25
Cross Organisational Decision/Direction Accuracy	18,75
Cross Organisational Creativity/Problem Solving	18,55
Cross Organisational delivery precision & quality	18,5

* Base reference value was at program start.

8. Discussion and Implications

Holding an integrative, inclusive approach to inner development have proven to be key. The Vertical Development frameworks have served beautifully as instruments to deepen self awareness, self acceptance and self love. Enabling more of a leader's inherent capacity.

The resulting effects for the individual leader are astonishing, with dramatic increases spanning from life satisfaction to leadership confidence, through meta system awareness. The resulting organisational effects are also astonishing, with dramatic increases in productivity, employee satisfaction, creativity and collaboration to mention a few. The method used, leading to the measured results, argues that we need to adopt a holistic, inclusive, integrative approach to adult development. The current paradigm centered in a stong "expert/achiever" will risk an expert/achiever approach to adult development - which will inhibit the very development strived for.

Detailed Info: https://www.intothenew.online/en/actionresearch

Hamman, M. Vertical Facilitation: A Method for Developmental Transformation in Business Environments

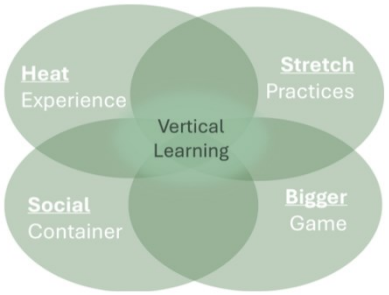
Background and Aim:

The term 'vertical facilitation' grows out of a decades long study of the nature of transformative learning. This study was ignited when, more than 30 years ago, I participated in a very intense 4-day seminar that had a profoundly transformative effect on me and my life. What was so striking about the experience, however, was that the transformation had little to do with ideas, concepts or techniques to *remember*. Rather, it was a transformation in the manner in which life conditions and circumstances themselves seemed to change, without my having to necessarily "do" anything.

From this experience, a research question gradually formed: "what is the nature of inner *transformation*—in the sense described above--and how might it be deliberately effected?" Subsequent independent research took me through adult development theory, transformative learning theory, relational systems dynamics, dialogical practice, and ontological-hermeneutic philosophy. Meanwhile, I have co-created and led a variety of learning programs which became well-known in my field for leaving people with what they called "life-changing" experiences. In this session, I want to share some reflections on the nature of transformative (vertical) learning— as described above—and to pose a possible method by which it can be deliberately effected.

What is 'Transformative' Learning and How Might It Be Effected?

Building on the relevant literature, and on my own experience, I have come to define transformative learning as that which happens when there is a non-linear shift in how people make sense of the world such that new realms of effective action become available. Such a shift is deliberately effected, not necessarily by virtue of the presentation of ideas, concepts or even "experiences", per se—but rather through the ontological staging of moments of dissonance between a well-established meaning-making frame and one which a desired mode of potential action calls for—what I will be calling a 'Heat' experience. I use the term "staging" intentionally, in that it is a kind of phenomenological "happening" (to use Martin Heidegger's term) that deliberately side-steps the mind's gift for translating novel experiences into already known categories. Such a "staging" has an ecosystemic quality which I refer to (after Kegan and Lahey) as a "deliberately developmental learning environment" (DDE). A DDE typically occurs over some time (at least a period of six weeks) and which is constituted as a group learning experience, typically with anywhere between 8 and 18 people in a group. The DDE essentially constitutes four overlapping design elements. The method refers to the deliberately developmental learning environment that occurs over some time (at least a period of six weeks) and which is constituted as a group learning experience, typically with anywhere between 8 and 18 people in a group. As we walk through the elements, and how they all ultimately relate to each other, bear in mind that these are like the legs of a table: you need to activate all four elements in order to bring about the transformative effect.



1. We start with a Heat Experience, which in many ways can be viewed as the fulcrum of the model. Heat experiences are experiences in which individuals and/or groups come to a point of inner 'crisis'—a "disorienting dilemma" A *disorienting dilemma* presents itself in terms of two contrasting meaning-making paradigms: one that is familiar and thus-far efficacious; and another that is vague and unfamiliar, but to which a person is drawn through a felt sense of new possibility which it poses. Such moments can be psychologically—and, in fact, to some degree necessarily are—challenging to navigate, since they require a person to remain within an undefined 'liminal' space in which neither meaning-making paradigm quite fits. To facilitate the navigation of such a liminal experience requires the deliberate composition of conditions—the other three legs of the table…

2. A Social Container is a deliberately activated 'holding environment' in which people feel both safe and emboldened to fully step into the challenging inner territories activated by Heat Experiences. It is an intensely social space which the facilitator activates through a set of deliberate practices, and a special quality of psychologically holding the group, such that people are empowered to fully step into the challenging inner territories through which Heat experiences so often take them. The effects are enhanced when the 3rd leg comes into play.…

3. A Bigger Game refers to a commitment that stretches far beyond one's ordinary day-to-day life. Professional athletes act from such a place, as do highly visionary leaders of all stripes. When such a commitment is held both individually & collectively, the empowering and enabling potential of the container, and the developmental potential provided by the Heat. Experience, are significantly amplified. There are specific practices and facilitative moves by which such an atmosphere of deep commitment is catalyzed.

4. Stretch Practices are specific practices and skills that have the effect of psycho-activating and consolidating the developmental potential induced by the Heat Experience. It transforms a moment of insight into sustained developmental inevitability. The learning environment itself is an important laboratory in which one initially learns and develops such practices. However, it is when people bring these into applied practice outside of the learning environment—debriefing their experiences back within the learning environment—that their transformative power is more potently effected.

My Experience in Working in this Way

The 'art' of vertical facilitation arises from the ability to authentically interact with people, and to 'hold' the larger social container, in a way that lovingly and assertively brings people to meaning- making edges— 'edges' in which basic meaning-making assumptions come to be seriously questioned and transgressed—while at the same time, side-stepping the egoic mind's ability to translate the felt experience of those edges into something familiar. The practice is intensely dialogical, interactive, emergent, and socially engaging. It also really takes something to facilitate and lead with groups in this way: I myself am often at least as transformed as everyone else. People typically leave such experiences with a heightened sense of personal efficacy, and a new ability to effect transformative changes in the groups and teams which they themselves work with. I have found, through follow-up interviews, that the transformative effect persists some years later.In this presentation, I will share key aspects of the methodology, my own experience as a facilitator, and the results, with examples drawn from the numerous programs I have led, primarily with business coaches and consultants, over the last 10+ years.

Thursday 12th June

9:30am Stream 1: Wellbeing, coping and emotions across adulthood

Fundinho, J.F & Ferreira-Alves, J. ***Navigating emotions: do social skills and verbal fluency matter in older adults' emotional recognition?***

Background and Aim

According to socio-emotional selectivity theory, individuals' social interaction goals shift as they age and perceive time as limited. Cognitive objectives become secondary to emotional ones, leading to a preference for relationships that enhance well-being over those that facilitate knowledge acquisition. This raises an important question: Do older adults prioritise emotionally oriented social skills, along with their cognitive resources, to respond to emotional cues?

Method *(if theoretical paper, describe theoretical approach instead)*

In this study, we evaluated the performance of 62 older adults using the "Reading the Mind in the Eyes" test, which assesses the recognition of emotions through images of partial faces (specifically the eye region). We also examined the relationship between this performance and COWAT (verbal fluency test) alongside responses from the Social Skills Inventory.

Results

Our findings reveal that accurately identifying negative emotions is positively associated with the social skills of expressing positive affect and giving praise, as well as verbal fluency. Conversely, no significant relationship was found between the correct identification of positive emotions and either social skills or verbal fluency. We tested four multiple regression models: two predicting positive emotions and two predicting negative emotions. All models included verbal fluency as a predictor but varied in the social skills: two focused on emotion-oriented skills (expression of positive affect and giving praise) and two on cognitive-oriented skills (assertive coping and defending interests). None of the models significantly predicted the recognition of positive emotions. While cognitive-oriented skills did not predict negative emotion recognition, emotion-oriented skills emerged as significant predictors, particularly the expression of positive affect.

Discussion and Implications

These results support the socio-emotional selectivity theory, suggesting that emotion-oriented social skills are more beneficial for older adults, when used alongside their cognitive resources. Although no connections were found regarding positive emotions, the link between social skills and negative emotions may indicate older adults' prioritization of addressing others' negative emotions, which could be personally rewarding.

Rodríguez-Pérez, M. et al. ***"Psychological Well-Being Models for Emerging Adulthood: Finding the Right Fit"***

Emerging adulthood (EA) is a pivotal phase of development that occurs between adolescence and full adulthood. This stage is characterized by the transition to legal adulthood, which does not always coincide with the adoption of age-appropriate roles. During this period, individuals embark on the process of defining a life project, often exhibiting a self-centered attitude while exploring the possibilities that life offers. The decisions made and competencies developed during EA significantly influence the framework within which future life trajectories unfold, underscoring its crucial role in mental well-being. However, it is noteworthy that there are no theories of positive mental health that specifically address EA.

Addressing this deficit, the aim of this paper is to analyses, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the main theoretical models proposed from philosophy and psychology to explain positive mental health during adulthood. The identification of specific aspects of the models that respond to the characteristics of emerging adulthood (EA) and the aspects where these models are deficient, as they are not properly applicable due to their specific characteristics, is also proposed.

In this regard, we point to the common origin of all models in the question of what a good life consists of and what are the elements that constitute it. Using the dimensional taxonomy proposed by Intelisano et al. (2019), we show significant similarities among the principal eudaimonic-functioning models (Ryff, 1989; Keyes, 1998; Nussbaum, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000), which tend to be high in stability and emphasise cognitive processes. By contrast, models stemming from the hedonic tradition (Diener, 1984) are characterised by less stable components and a stronger focus on affective processes.

We consider that the situation of emerging adulthood in Europe requires an integrative framework of understanding and intervention that transcends the original divisions of the intellectual traditions from which the models originate. In this sense, the tripartite model of well-being proposed by Sheldon and Martela (2019) offers a promising convergence. It integrates the main elements of optimal functioning through its two eudaimonic categories, while reserving a distinct category for subjective well-being and clarifying the dynamic interplay between them.

Moreover, the three subcomponents of the tripartite model are particularly well-suited to the specific characteristics of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). The first, "eudaimonic motives and activities," provides a compass for identity exploration, life path construction, and openness to possibility—hallmarks of this stage. The other two components, "psychological need satisfaction" and "subjective well-being," serve as both objective and subjective benchmarks to assess adaptation to the frequent changes characteristic of this period. Overall, this holistic model appears especially well-equipped to monitor quality of life during the transition from adolescence to full adulthood.

The conclusion drawn from this analysis emphasizes the necessity of developing theoretical models that align with the characteristics and needs of this particular population. It is through the creation of such refined frameworks that we can hope to design effective intervention strategies for mental health and personal counselling systems, tailored to the specific requirements of this population.

Çobanoğlu, A. et al. ***Psychosocial Challenges of Turkish Students Abroad: A Descriptive Study on the Intersection of Postgraduate Stressors and Wellbeing Issues in Emerging Adulthood***

Background and Aim: Postgraduate education abroad offers valuable opportunities for academic growth and social and cultural development. However, international graduate students often face psychological and social challenges during the adaptation process in the host country, particularly while navigating the developmental demands of emerging adulthood. This descriptive study aims to explore the psychosocial challenges experienced by Turkish postgraduate students studying abroad.

Methods: The study employs a cross-sectional mixed-methods design. The online survey includes scales to assess participants' psychological well-being, perceived loneliness, and social support, along with several open-ended questions. A self-report online survey has been conducted among 691 Turkish postgraduate students aged 23–29[1] in various countries, including the UK, the USA, Germany, and the Netherlands. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis are used to analyse the quantitative and qualitative datasets. Next, predictors of psychological well-being will be examined using multiple linear regression using Stata.

Results: Preliminary quantitative results indicate that many Turkish postgraduate students face significant psychosocial challenges abroad. 28% reported needing psychological support and assistance. Common difficulties included coping with stress, adaptation and establishing supportive social connections (N=264, 38%). The key themes identified are loneliness, adaptation difficulties, and other challenging experiences. Qualitative results also reveal their anxiety about not meeting the developmental tasks of emerging adulthood, such as securing a stable job, marriage, and parenthood.

Discussion and Implications: The study points out a significant need for support among Turkish postgraduate students abroad, with loneliness, adaptation difficulties, and stress being common challenges. A significant proportion of students needing support indicates the importance of addressing psychosocial issues, especially for at-risk emerging adults. Policymakers and institutions should focus on improving communication, social networks, and support systems to enhance students' well-being for navigating the challenges of studying abroad and promoting their well-being in emerging adulthood.

9.30am Stream 2: Exploring the Potential Positive Effects of Classic Psychedelic Use On Emerging Adult Development

In this presentation and disussion, Jake will outline the preliminary findings from his PhD. First, he will discuss a narrative review that utilised Robinson's (2020) framework to generate hypotheses regarding possible ways that psychedelic use may positively interact with emerging adult development. Here, we reviewed potential pathways psychedelics may facilitate emerging adults' positive orthogenetic, veridical-epistemic, eudaimonic, relational, and ethical developmental trajectories through changes in personality trait openness, beliefs systems, self-insight and social concern. Secondly, he will discuss the findings from a qualitative survey that investigated retrospective reports of ways that Australian men were positively impacted by their classic psychedelic use during emerging adulthood. Lastly, he will present findings from the Monitoring the Future Data about the quantitative relationship between patterns of psychedelics during emerging adulthood use and completion of adult developmental tasks at age 30.

11:30am Stream 1: Conceptions of adulthood and future perspectives in emerging / established adults

La Rosa, V.L. & Commodari, E. ***Determinants of Life Satisfaction and Future Perspectives in Italian Emerging Adults' Development: Insights from an Empirical Study***

Background and Aim

[1] To maintain homogeneity within the sample and align with the theoretical framework of emerging adulthood (18-29 years), participants over 29 were excluded.

Emerging adulthood is a critical developmental stage characterized by identity exploration, instability, and self-focus that shapes life satisfaction and future perspectives. This study explores how emotion regulation, identification with emerging adulthood characteristics, attachment representations, and perceived parenting styles contribute to life satisfaction and future thinking in Italian emerging adults.

Method

Data collection is nearing completion. Preliminary analyses are based on 820 participants (607 females, 204 males, 9 unspecified; age 18-30 years, M = 24.47, SD = 4.08) who completed validated questionnaires. Emotion regulation was assessed using the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale, while identification with dimensions of emerging adulthood was measured using the Inventory of the

Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood. The Attachment Style Questionnaire assessed representations of attachment, and the Parental Bonding Instrument assessed perceived maternal and paternal care and overprotection. Life satisfaction was measured with the Satisfaction with Life Scale, and future orientation was assessed with the Future Thinking Questionnaire. Hierarchical regression analyses examined the predictive role of these variables.

Results

Preliminary results show that better emotion regulation and greater identification with positive dimensions of emerging adulthood, particularly Possibility and Identity exploration, are associated with higher life satisfaction and more optimistic future prospects. In contrast, higher scores on Feeling in-between and Instability are associated with lower life satisfaction and greater uncertainty about the future. Secure attachment predicts greater satisfaction, while insecure styles (anxious and avoidant) are associated with lower satisfaction and uncertain future expectations. Maternal and paternal care and less overprotection are associated with more positive future expectations and greater life satisfaction.

Discussion and Implications

These findings highlight the importance of emotion regulation, emerging adulthood dimensions, and attachment representations in shaping well-being. Further analyses will provide insights that highlight the need for interventions that promote secure attachment, parental support, and adaptive emotion regulation strategies to support young adult transitions.

Mitra, D. and Arnett, J.J. *Conceptions of Adulthood in India*.

Background and Aim: The transition to adulthood is shaped by cultural expectations, influencing how emerging adults define and experience this period. In India, adulthood is associated with independence, self-sufficiency, and a sense of duty toward family and society. Contrary to assumptions about collectivist cultures, role transitions such as marriage and parenthood are not primary markers of adulthood. This study explores conceptions of adulthood among Indian emerging adults, considering how autonomy and familial responsibilities are negotiated in a rapidly changing cultural landscape

Method: A survey-based approach was used to collect data from 342 emerging adults (ages 18-29) across urban, semi-urban, and rural regions of India. Participants completed a modified version of the Markers of Adulthood Questionnaire and responded to open-ended questions on their perceptions of adulthood. Participants were recruited via social media, professional networks, and public flyers, representing linguistic and regional diversity.

Results: Financial independence, autonomy, and emotional maturity were the most cited adulthood markers for reaching adulthood in India. While 46% felt they had reached adulthood, 49% felt “in some ways yes, in some ways no,” and 5% reported not yet reaching adulthood. Those affirming adulthood emphasized self-sufficiency, while those feeling in-between cited continued parental support and emotional growth.

Discussion and Implications: Findings align with the "Big Three" adulthood criteria—responsibility, independence, and financial self-sufficiency – common in Western contexts, but Indian participants also emphasized emotional maturity and family responsibility. Women reported a delayed sense of adulthood, and older participants were more likely to affirm adulthood. Compared to past research, traditional gender norms had less influence. These findings contribute to cross-cultural understandings of emerging adulthood and highlight India’s evolving sociocultural landscape.

Mehta, C. et al. ***Faking it and Figuring it out: Established Adults’ Sense of Adulthood***

Background & Aims

In the US traditional markers of adulthood like age and milestone events (e.g. marriage, children) have shifted toward personal criteria including self-responsibility, independent decision-making, and financial independence (Arnett & Padilla-Walker, 2015). Whilst there is a large body of research examining markers of adulthood in emerging adulthood (ages 18-29), when most feel as though they are not yet adults (Arnett, 2024), there is no research investigating markers of adulthood in established adulthood (ages 30-45), when adulthood is generally reached. The present qualitative study aims to fill this research gap, contributing to our understanding of adulthood across the lifespan.

Method: Participants. Participants in the present study were 30 US heterosexual established adults aged 30-45 (M = 37, SD = 4.29). Participants self-identified as White (64%), Black (27%), and Asian (7%).

Procedure. Data were collected using semi-structured open-ended interviews. Interview questions included “what makes you feel like an adult?” and “what does it feel like to you to be this age?” Interviews lasted 1-2 hours. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results: Participants identified traditional and modern markers of adulthood. Superordinate themes (subthemes in parentheses) included: Self-Regulation (Cognitive Regulation, Emotional Regulation) Developmental Milestones (Meeting Traditional Milestones, Financial Independence, Independence from Parents, Increased Responsibilities) Adulthood Dissonance Negotiation (Internal Questioning of Adulthood, Missing Milestones, Distancing from Adulthood) Adult Transitions (Social Pressure to Meet Milestones, Transitioning to Adulthood, Independent Learning). Representative quotes are omitted because of space limitations but will be included in the presentation.

Discussion: Our results suggest that established adults in the US generally think about markers of adulthood differently than emerging adults and that the transition to adulthood may take longer than researchers initially believed. This has implications for researchers and for mental health practitioners supporting people transitioning to adulthood.

11:30am Stream 2: Health and resilience in later adulthood

Hollis-Sawyer, L. ***Incomplete Healthcare for Older Women: "Double Jeopardy" Discrimination in Care***

Background and Aim:

Healthcare disparities for older women are marked by pervasive misconceptions that link their health complaints to standard aging or psychological factors rather than physical pathology. This phenomenon, often referred to as “double jeopardy,” reflects the intersection of ageism and sexism within medical settings. Previous studies have highlighted how older women’s symptoms, particularly those related to chronic conditions like fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome, are frequently dismissed or misdiagnosed as psychosomatic. This results in inadequate care, with physical health issues overshadowed by unvalidated emotional experiences. Healthcare providers often minimize older women’s concerns, further exacerbating their health struggles (World Health Organization, 2021). This presentation explores how this form of discrimination undermines effective healthcare, its psychological toll on patients, and its long-term consequences on well-being.

Method: The study uses qualitative case studies and a critical literature review to explore older women's healthcare experiences. By examining the intersectionality of age and gender in clinical settings, the research identifies patterns of misdiagnosis, treatment delay, and inadequate response to physical symptoms. Data is based on patients’ narratives.

Results: Several case studies illustrate the consequences of “double jeopardy” discrimination in practice. They highlight instances where healthcare providers dismissed or misinterpreted symptoms, resulting in misaligned treatment plans. They also demonstrate the emotional and mental toll on patients, such as feelings of frustration and isolation.

Discussion and Implications: This presentation will discuss healthcare providers’ biases and the need for specific training to combat age and gender discrimination. Policy recommendations and practical strategies for addressing these biases will focus on fostering more inclusive, empathetic care. The importance of participatory decision-making for older women is discussed. By addressing these gaps, healthcare systems can improve older women's quality of life and health outcomes.

Nicholson, G. ***Simple Lines, Solid Outcomes: The Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Adult Community Art Classes***

Background and Aim

In an era of rapid social and economic change, fostering resilience and wellbeing is crucial for healthy ageing and life transitions. This study examines how community art classes provide a transformative space for adults navigating key life stages, offering creative pathways to resilience, meaning-making, and mental wellbeing. Despite being dismissed as "soft" interventions, creative arts programmes play a vital role in public health. This research supports the integration of community arts into adult development frameworks for system-wide wellbeing benefits.

Method: A mixed-methods approach was employed, with over 100 participants completing pre-course EQ-5D-5L questionnaires to assess health-related quality of life. Qualitative data from open-ended responses provided deeper insights into the personal impact of creative engagement.

Results: The findings highlight the role of creative participation in enhancing resilience and mental wellbeing, with key themes emerging:

- Sanctuary: Art classes provided a flexible space for self-reflection and stress reduction.
- Life Transitions: Participants navigating retirement, bereavement, or major life changes found creative engagement to be a valuable tool for adaptation.
- Community & Meaning-Making: Collaborative learning fostered social bonds, reduced isolation, and renewed a sense of purpose.

The study also revealed:

- Anxiety and Depression: 45% of participants reported anxiety or depression, with 7% experiencing severe symptoms and 3% extreme symptoms.
- Demographic Trends: Higher anxiety and depression were found among females, older adults (65+), retired individuals, and those in smaller households (1-2 people).

Discussion and Implications: This research underscores the role of creative arts in fostering resilience throughout life. By engaging in meaning-making through art, adult learners develop cognitive and emotional adaptability, essential for navigating 21st-century challenges. The findings support the integration of creative arts into broader adult development strategies, emphasising their value for ageing populations, system transformation, and mental wellbeing.

Finegan, T. et al. ***Resilience and Wellbeing in Older Age through an Age Friendly University – A Case Study***

Background/Aim: The multi-campus South East Technological University (SETU) in the southeast of Ireland is the focus and location of this case study. Using Research through Design (RtD) methodology the project set out to develop a framework for an Age Friendly University (AFU). The global population is ageing and with this comes challenges on how to maintain health and wellbeing into older age. Social connections and maintaining brain functioning are important to ageing well.

. An AFU which engages older adults in its educational activities and its social and cultural offerings can facilitate both. In addition, research with and by older adults within an AFU can determine ways for healthy ageing.

Method: RtD, a participatory, inclusive and reflexive research methodology, was used to work collaboratively with stakeholders. In addition, a Research Advisory Group (RAG) was established, working alongside the lead researcher as an integral part of the process. Furthermore, creative co-design methods were utilised, putting stakeholders at the centre of the process.

Result: Through a participatory, collaborative process with shared power and decision-making an AFU framework for SETU is being developed.

Discussion/Implications: The aim of the World Health Organisations (WHO) Age Friendly Cities and Communities Programme is to improve the health, wellbeing and resilience of older adults through active healthy ageing through eight domains3(see figure 1). The ten principles of an AFU were developed using those domains. The goal of the AFU is improved health and wellbeing and building resilience amongst older adults within SETU's catchment area. Using RtD, creative co-design methods and a RAG this project achieved a consensus between stakeholders and across campuses on an AFU framework for SETU. It focussed on the strengths that stakeholders, and the campuses and communities, brought to the process. All voices were listened to, developing a collaborative, inclusive AFU framework for the multi-campus SETU.

Figure 1 Eight Domains of the Age Friendly City & Community Programme

13:30: Keynote Talk

Dawson, T. ***From theory to practice: Cultivating minds that are ready for almost anything***

Abstract: We're living in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. Right now, relatively few of us are equipped with the skills, resilience, agility, and endurance required to tackle its challenges and leverage its opportunities. Moreover, the lifeworlds we inhabit often work against us, depriving us of the human-normal formative and (mostly social) experiences we need to develop optimally. For the last 30 years, my colleagues and I have been searching for simple, scalable ways to optimize mental development for everyone, not to increase intelligence or developmental scores, but to give everyone the opportunity to build skills for learning the way our brains are designed to learn—with joy, satisfaction, and just the right amount of pain. Minds that develop in this way grow faster, better, and further, and people with minds like these are more hopeful, effective, adaptive, and resilient. In this talk, I'm going to share highlights of the research that eventually led us to two simple learning tools that are already being used around the world to support optimal mental development—and grow more minds that are ready for almost anything.

Biography: Dr Theo Dawson is the founder and managing director of Lectica, Inc. She received her PhD from the University of California at Berkeley's Graduate School of Education. Her award-winning dissertation presented a new approach to measuring learning and describing learning pathways. Since the mid-1990s,

Dawson has been building and deploying learning tools that support optimal mental development—focusing on the skills people need to navigate the challenges and opportunities of 21st-century life. She is an active blogger and the author of numerous articles, book chapters, and reports on issues related to human development in journals such as Cognitive Development, Mind, Brain, and Education, The European Journal of Developmental Psychology, Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs, The Journal of Applied Measurement, and Developmental Review. Theo has acted as a consultant to institutions like the US Federal Government, Harvard University, the University of Ireland, and a wide variety of businesses and schools, both in the US and abroad.

15:00 Stream 1: Women and reproductive development

Fonseca, A. et al. ***Exploring women's mental health and the factors associated with flourishing during menopause***

Background and Aim: Mental health is more than the absence of psychopathology. It is conceptualized as a continuum from low (i.e., languishing) to high (i.e., flourishing) mental well-being. Menopause has been associated with an increased risk of developing mental health problems, but few studies have explored the association between menopause and overall well-being. This study aimed to characterize women's menopausal symptoms and mental health during (peri)menopause and to investigate the factors associated with flourishing.

Method: A sample of 567 women in perimenopause (66.1%) and post-menopause (33.9%) participated in a cross-sectional online survey. Descriptive statistics, correlations between study variables and comparison tests were computed. Sociodemographic, clinical and menopause-related variables were included in a multivariate binary logistic regression model to evaluate the influence of each variable on flourishing.

Results: Participants had a mean score of 14.34 (*SD*=6.74) on the Cervantes scale, reporting an average of 7 menopausal symptoms (*SD*=2.17). 190 participants (33.5%) presented clinically relevant symptoms of anxiety and 80 (14.1%) presented clinically relevant symptoms of depression. Overall, 38.3% of participants were flourishing.

Women flourishing reported less severe menopausal symptoms, lower levels of anxiety and depression, attributed less their symptoms to menopause, perceived more positive and fewer negative consequences of menopause, and had a higher perception of control over their symptoms compared to non-flourishing women.

The multivariate analysis showed that lower levels of depression were significantly associated with a higher likelihood of flourishing. Regarding menopause representations, higher perceptions of positive consequences and lower perceptions of negative consequences were associated with flourishing.

Discussion and Implications: These findings highlight the importance of educating women about menopause (e.g., symptoms, impact, treatments) to enhance their sense of control in managing symptoms. Psychological interventions should aim to reduce depressive symptoms, while promoting positive perceptions of menopause and reducing negative ones, ultimately contributing to better mental health.

Young, I. et al. ***"From Pandora to Empowerment": The reproductive storytelling of three graduate students at Columbia University***

Background and Aim: This autoethnographic study explores how three graduate students at Teachers College, Columbia University construct their reproductive identities amid societal expectations, health challenges, and personal aspirations. Using identity theory and narrative analysis, the study examines how reproductive choices intersect with self-concept and social pressures. By centering personal experiences, this research broadens the understanding of reproductive identity as a socially embedded and evolving aspect of self, particularly in the transitional time period of emerging adulthood

Method: Through an autoethnographic framework, the study employs narrative analysis to explore the lived experiences of Isabella Young, Pavita Singh, and Shriya Gaur. This method allows for a deeply personal, yet theoretically grounded examination of how reproductive identity is shaped by individual aspirations, cultural norms, and health-related factors.

Results: The thematic analysis reveals tensions between societal expectations and personal agency in shaping reproductive identity. Young's narrative highlights the impact of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) on her self-concept and dreams of motherhood. Singh grapples with balancing personal fulfillment with the privilege and responsibility of providing for future children. Gaur, a queer Indian woman, resists patriarchal norms as she redefines reproductive identity within her sexual identity. Health concerns introduce further uncertainty for Young and Gaur, reinforcing the vulnerability embedded in reproductive identity.

Discussion and Implications: This study challenges the notion of reproductive choices as purely individual, illustrating how they emerge through an interplay of personal values and external influences. By situating reproductive identity within a broader sociocultural framework, the findings advocate for more inclusive conversations around reproductive rights and identity formation, particularly in academic spaces engaging with emerging adulthood and shifting life stages.

Athan, A. & Sholomon, L. *Reproductive Identity Development: From If, When, How… to Who*

Aim: This workshop introduces *Reproductive Identity* (RI) as an emerging concept with implications for understanding the evolving nature of reproductive self-concept across the lifespan. Traditional reproductive life planning models focus on "If, When, How" decisions, yet RI extends this to "Who," emphasizing its identity-based and meaning-making dimensions. RI is also closely linked to the adult development concept of *generativity*—the process of passing down aspects of the self through parenting, mentoring, or creative endeavors. Participants will explore how reproductive identity intersects with other major life transitions, including career establishment and partnership formation.

Method: This interactive session combines theoretical discussion with self-reflective exercises to enhance self-awareness adaptability in navigating reproductive transitions.. Guided reflections will be supplemented by lectures on identity development models from gender and sexuality research. Participants will assess their reproductive identity across five core dimensions: directionality, intensity, centrality, fluidity, and agency. They will also have the option to write about or engage in small-group sharing of brief reproductive life stories and analyze the socio-cultural messages they have internalized.

Results: Reproductive Identity provides a developmental lens for decision-making, offering an alternative to linear, rational-choice models. It accounts for the complexity of reproductive identity alongside other competing adulthood tasks. RI also aligns with models that trace identity development from diffusion and ambivalence to clarity and resolution. Lastly, time permitting, preliminary findings from our data collection on the drivers of RI among emerging adult sexual health educators will be shared.

Discussion and Implications: This session will provide participants with tools to apply RI in their work as researchers or practitioners. Recognizing reproductive identity as a developmental construct enables its innovative measurement in research and its clinical application to help clients reflect on their identity before

making behavioral decisions. The session will also explore implications for assessing adaptive and nonadaptive markers of reproductive identity in the participants themselves and those they work with.

Singh, V. ***Navigating Midlife Transitions: Psychological and Sleep-Related correlates of Perimenopause in Indian Women***

Background and Aim: Perimenopause, the transitional stage before menopause, is characterized by hormonal fluctuations that significantly impact women's psychological well-being. Anxiety and depression are commonly observed among perimenopausal women, yet limited research explores these associations in the Indian context. This study investigates the psychological, somatic, urogenital, and sleep disturbance symptoms associated with perimenopause in middle-aged Indian women and their correlation with anxiety and depression. By addressing this gap, the research aims to contribute to the understanding of mental health challenges during this phase and their implications for intervention.

Method: A correlational study was conducted with 1000 Indian middle-aged women (35-60 years) experiencing perimenopause, recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. The Menopause Rating Scale (MRS) was used to assess perimenopausal symptoms, while the Goldberg Anxiety and Depression Scale (GADS) measured psychological distress. Additionally, the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) was used to assess sleep disturbances. Data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis to determine the association between perimenopausal symptoms, anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances.

Results: Findings revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = .752$, $p < 0.001$) between perimenopausal symptoms and anxiety/depression. Somatic ($r = .765$), psychological ($r = .693$), urogenital ($r = .659$), and sleep disturbances ($r = .720$) symptoms were significantly associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms. Regression analysis showed that sleep disturbances were a significant predictor of anxiety and depression ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$), along with somatic and psychological symptoms. Women aged 50-60 reported the highest severity of symptoms. The study highlights a pronounced increase in anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances as perimenopausal symptoms intensify, emphasizing the critical need for targeted mental health interventions.

Discussion and Implications: The study underscores the psychological burden of perimenopause, advocating for culturally sensitive mental health strategies tailored to Indian women. The inclusion of sleep disturbances as a significant variable highlights the need for holistic approaches in managing perimenopausal mental health. The findings call for increased awareness, targeted interventions, and policy changes to support women's health during perimenopause. Future research should explore socio-cultural determinants influencing symptom perception and coping mechanisms. Integrating psychological and sleep assessments into routine gynecological care may improve early intervention and quality of life during midlife transitions.

15:00 Stream 2: Leadership in context

Andree, B. et al. ***Integrating Leader and Leadership Development: Exploring Complementary Frameworks Approach to Vertical Growth***

Background and Aim:

Despite advancements in adult development research, practical applications remain fragmented, often isolating individual *leader development* (cognitive, identity, and capability growth) from *leadership development* (collective relational and cultural dynamics). Drawing on David Day's distinction, this session presents an integrated model for fostering vertical development across multiple levels.

We explore three interrelated perspectives:

1. Coach Development (Dr. Alis Anagnostakis): How internal coaches can support vertical growth beyond competency-based coaching and act as developmental catalysts in organizational culture.
2. Complexity of Thinking Development (Dr. Becky Andree): How dynamic skills and virtuous cycles of learning accelerate cognitive growth in leaders.
3. Leadership Development Program Design (Dr. Marilyn Bugenhagen): How organizations can structure programs that foster both individual and collective vertical transformation.

We propose complementary frameworks that integrate ego development, structural development, and systems thinking, equipping practitioners with interventions that support both individual and systemic transformation.

Method (Theoretical Approach):

- Integrating structural and ego development theories with system approaches.
- Applying David Day's *Leader vs. Leadership Development* framework to vertical growth strategies.
- Case studies from coaching, leadership development, and organizational transformation programs.

Results (Key Conceptual Points):

- Development is Contextual and Relational: Aligning individual and system-wide leadership dynamics.
- Bridging Structural and Ego Development: Enabling development from different starting points with strategies for both cognitive complexity and self-identity growth.
- Practitioner-Oriented Interventions: Actionable strategies for coaches, leaders, and leadership development professionals.

Discussion and Implications:

- Alignment with ESRAD's focus on system transformation and resilience.
- Practical implications for coaching methodologies and leadership programs.
- The need for further empirical research on multi-disciplinary interventions in adult and leader development.

Ouellette-Schramm, J. (Walden University). ***Educational Leaders Navigating Conflict: Preliminary Developmental Findings Using Two Measures***

1. Background and Aim: Many educational leaders are challenged by conflict management demands in their roles while working to enact positive change. This study investigates educational leaders' experiences navigating conflict and polarization in relationship to their adult developmental perspectives. The goal of this study is to understand how educational leaders use their developmental and leadership capacities to navigate conflict and polarization to enact positive change. A secondary goal is to explore how two developmental measures, the Subject Object Interview (SOI) and MyWorldView leadership assessment, triangulate to shed light on educational leaders' conflict experiences.

2. Method: This study employs a basic qualitative research design with 18 participants. Data includes the SOI, the MyWorldView (MWV) leadership action logic assessment, and a demographic questionnaire. The SOI is the methodological instrument of Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory used to assess developmental stage. MyWorldView (MWV) is a new Artificial Intelligence (AI)-scored psychometric measuring Bill Torbert's leadership developmental action logics.

3. Results: At this early analytical stage, developmental data for ten participants has been completed. Interestingly, in only one of ten cases do the SOI and MyWorldView findings indicate "equivalent" stages for each participant as comparisons of Kegan and Torbert's theories have been interpreted. In nine of ten, the SOI indicates an earlier stage than MyWorldView.

Discussion and Implications: Previous research indicates that higher stages of development correspond with increased leadership capacity including the ability to generatively navigate conflict. Differences in the developmental pictures that the SOI and MyWorldView paint of participants' developmental capacities invite inquiry regarding how the measures relate and how they shed light on leaders' capacities. Tentative implications will be presented with an invitation for input from attendees.

Kjellström, S. & DeLauer, V. ***Fostering Collaboration in Multi-Stakeholder Change: Dual Leadership Approaches in Coproduction***

Background and Aim

In response to the pressing challenges of our era, there is a growing demand for collaborative efforts that engage diverse stakeholders. Coproduction is such attempt during which stakeholders and professionals unite to enact change while advocating for "doing with" rather than "doing for." It posits that such transformative practices necessitate complex meaning-making to match their inherent intricacies. The purpose was to understand leaders different ways to make meaning of RAD

Method

This study involved 15 semi-structured interviews with experienced facilitators and leaders from four different countries focused on leadership and co-production. A thematic analysis was then performed on the data, along with independently scoring by two evaluators scoring for the Subject-Object Interview (Lahey et al., 1988).

Results

The study identified two distinct approaches to meaning-making in coproduction, which shape their roles and the dynamics of the process. Both approaches foster a collaborative environment where every stakeholder's voice is valued. The first approach is based on principles of equality, consensus, and a sense of responsibility towards others. The second approach focuses on shared learning, self-care for the leader, and process responsibility, viewing coproduction as an emergent and experimental practice. As complexity increases, conflict becomes a less personal and more fluid element, essential for learning and growth. Additionally, power shifts from being a hierarchical asset to a shared, collective experience, leading to a transition in leadership from a controlling to a more adaptive, "light touch" style.

Discussion and Implications

The research highlights the importance of understanding these meaning-making strategies to develop more mindful and inclusive coproduction practices. The findings suggest a reflective journey towards comprehending coproduction, oneself, and the collective, aiming to create practices that resonate with the diverse perspectives of stakeholders.

Cavallaro, L. & Fram, B. ***How Marginalized Journeys Prompt Adult Development: LGBTQ+ leaders***

Background and Aim: LGBTQ+ individuals frequently encounter bias, stigma, and marginalization, yet these very challenges can serve as springboards for leadership in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous working world. This presentation aims to share recent research that uses adult development theory to understand the unique developmental journeys of LGBTQ+ leaders.

Method: Through a blend of surveys, interviews, and literature review, the presenters offer a framework showcasing the remarkable capabilities and resilience of LGBTQ+ leaders, and connecting their experience to Robert Kegan's theory of mental complexity. The sample included 95 short-answer survey responses, 12 hour-long semi-structured interviews, and 6 participant-written narrative submissions. Criteria

for inclusion were identity as a member of the LGBTQ+ community and having held a leadership role at any experience or level. The emphasis was on the participants' conception of leadership vice researcher defined. The survey and interview questions were focused on crucible experiences within participants' journey (e.g., coming out or transition), and experiences of adversity and struggle (e.g., bias, stigma, marginalization). Participants were also asked about strengths, skills, and capacities they developed during those journeys, and how they apply them to their leadership. Responses were used to build a description of how LGBTQ+ individuals develop through the lens of Kegan's theory of complexity (e.g., subject-object shifts; defining identity; self-authorship).

Results:

This research was built on an understanding of how challenging life experiences can act like crucibles prompting adult development. Participant stories showed the unique link between adversity and development experiences for LGBTQ+ leaders. While their experiences are diverse and varied, the shared themes of their stories illuminate the role adversity plays in human development, including providing opportunities to enhance mental complexity. The authors examine how LGBTQ+ individuals harness their unique experiences to excel as leaders. They move through adversity and develop greater resilience, wellbeing, and meaning- making capacity. Exploring the patterns in the participants' journeys provides a more nuanced understanding of adult development across all human experience. Exploring the shared elements of an LGBTQ+ journey, such as the experience of coming out or transitioning, with all adult journeys shows how we can learn from these narratives.

Discussion and Implications:

Understanding the nature of adult development within LGBTQ+ journeys may support efforts to improve inclusivity and belonging across organizations and society. This research points to actionable insights for creating positive change in both personal and professional spheres, and how these lessons can be applied more broadly

17:00 Evening *session:* Experiential Yoga Nidra workshop

McAnallen, G. Yoga Nidra as a tool to support the development of the 21st century mind

NB. Yoga Nidra is a form of meditation aimed at accessing states of consciousness in between waking and sleeping

Background and Aim:

I am an executive coach, focus on helping people to achieve their full potential by deepening the understanding of the role of conditioning and the relationship between the conscious and unconscious mind.

Method

Guided experience of Yoga Nidra, which is both a deep relaxation and a meditation technique. The guided experience includes physical relaxation techniques, breathing techniques and visualisation techniques to trigger the falling asleep reflex in the body so that the practitioner is guided by their own body to lower brainwave frequencies normally only accessed during sleep.

Results

Experienced meditators report dropping into lower brainwave frequencies than in their normal meditation practice and this state can also be experienced by people new to meditation if they remain conscious for the practice. The practice is designed to support access to alpha, theta and delta brainwave frequencies. MRI scans identify the activation of both sides of the brain during Yoga Nidra.

Discussion and Implications

Post the experience there will be a discussion of the relationship between lower brainwave frequencies, the conscious, unconscious and collective unconscious, higher states of consciousness, and adult development. Hopefully helping participants to appreciate the unique contribution of Yoga Nidra to evolving consciousness by acting as a bridge to lower brainwave frequencies, which when experienced consciously results in the creation of new neural pathways in the brain. In this way, Yoga Nidra is differentiated from sleep.

Friday 13th June

09:30 Stream 1: Higher education and development

Dutta, O. et al. ***Exploring the role of SDT-based internships in supporting psychology students' transition***

Background and aim: The transition from education to employment is a critical life stage that can impact wellbeing and resilience. Research indicates that this period can be challenging for young people, affecting their mental health and overall wellbeing (Reuter et al., 2022). While obtaining employment can lead to improvements in wellbeing, the transition itself may pose challenges (Milner & Law, 2019). Additionally, building resilience is important for young people aged 10 to 24 years, as they face significant life events during this transition (Oliver et al., 2006; Ungar & Theron, 2020). The aim of the present study was to investigate how Self-Determination Theory (Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020) (SDT)-inspired internships assist undergraduate psychology students during their transition from education to employment by enhancing autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Method: A phenomenological approach and semi-structured interviews were used to examine the lived experiences of undergraduate students (N=10) participating in an SDT-based internship programme. Data was analysed using the structured tabular thematic analysis (ST-TA) approach (Robinson, 2022).

Results: The internship programme facilitated holistic development, promoting self-evolution, adaptability, and collaborative critical thinking. Participants reported increased career readiness, confidence, resilience, and resourcefulness. The programme helped students bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-world applications, fostering meaning-making. The required dialectical thinking in complex workplace situations contributed to personal growth.

Discussion and implications: The study highlights the importance of experiential learning in promoting wellbeing and resilience (Gavillet, 2018; Kolb, 2014; Neill, 2008). It also underscores the potential of SDT principles in the design of educational programmes that support life stage transitions (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). The findings have implications for pedagogical programmes aimed at enhancing employability and career development. Aligning educational practices with psychological needs can better support students through critical life stages and enhance professional growth (Duffey & Somody, 2011; Hirschi, 2018).

Güçlü, C.H. et al. ***An Examination of the Predictors of Study Engagement among University Students***

Background and Aim: Study engagement influences and is influenced by various academic and psychological variables. While school burnout encompasses opposing constructs to study engagement, resilience and self-regulation play a crucial role in shaping university students' academic experiences. This study examines the predictive role of self-regulation, resilience, and school burnout in study engagement among university students.

Method: The study was conducted as descriptive/correlational research, and the study group consisted of a total of 366 undergraduate students, 333 female and 33 males ($\bar{X}$ =21.92), between the ages of 18-43, studying at different universities and departments in Ankara. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method. Data were collected through the Personal Information Form, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-Student Form, Resilience Scale for Adults, School Burnout Scale and Self-Regulation Scale. A stepwise regression analysis was conducted to investigate the predictive role of self-regulation, resilience, and school burnout on study engagement. The data were analyzed using SPSS.

Results: As a result of the stepwise regression analysis examining the predictors of students' study engagement, self-regulation skills (27.6%) significantly predicted study engagement, with $R^2 = 27.6$, $F(1, 364) = 140.304$, $p < .05$, followed by school burnout (0.5%) with $R^2 = 0.5$, $F(2, 89) = 89.902$, $p < .05$. Resilience did not significantly predict study engagement and was therefore excluded from the final model.

Discussion and Implications: As a result of the study, self-regulation skills are the most significant predictor of study engagement. Students with high self-regulation skills also exhibit high levels of work engagement. Self-regulation has been supported by numerous studies as a factor influencing study engagement, with strategies such as goal setting, planning, and objective determination affecting students' engagement. Students' dedication to academic content and their level of engagement in this process are influenced by their self-regulation skills. The other variable predicting study engagement is school burnout, with very small predictive power. Students' negative attitudes and behaviours towards school increase school burnout and reduce students' positive feelings and behaviours towards academic processes. However, considering that school burnout and work engagement are contrasting concepts, this result is expected. Resilience, on the other hand, was not included in the model and did not show any predictive value. Strengthening students' self-regulation skills is key to their academic development and engagement.

Molyn, J. *Benefits of Coaching Higher Education Students*

Background and Aim:

Students experience considerable difficulty and stress across different life domains (Slimmen et al., 2022), including money and mental health worries (Randstad, 2020). Employability of students, particularly from less privileged social backgrounds, is also an issue (Cheng et al., 2022; Gorard et al., 2019). Student coaching might be a way forward for the universities (Molyn, 2018). The presentation will discuss combined research findings, from four different research studies of the effectiveness and benefits of student coaching, from a large public London University.

Method:

The studies had the following designs:

(1) a mixed-method research into effectiveness and benefits of career coaching (N= 200+) (Molyn, 2018);

(2) an RCT study into the effectiveness of coaching in increasing students' wellbeing, goal attainment, resilience and in decreasing stress (N=105) (McDowall et al., unpublished);

(3) an RCT study into the effectiveness of AI coaching in increasing students' wellbeing, goal attainment, resilience and in decreasing stress (N= 105) (Terblanche et all., 2022a);

(4) a qualitative case study of group coaching supported with AI (Terblanche et all., 2022a).

Results:

(1) a coached group outperformed the experimental group in job seeking behaviours

(2) Coaching increased students' wellbeing, goal attainment, resilience and in decreased stress

(3) AI coaching increased students' goal attainment

(4) Increased confidence, self-awareness and goal setting.

8. Discussion and Implications: Top tier universities worldwide report on their websites that they offer coaching to their students. Yet, in the UK most lower tier universities have no funding for student coaching. As the role of Higher Education is to provide students with opportunities to develop their full potential, regardless of their background and wealth (Couldry (2011) there is a need for funding for student coaching (Molyn, 2018).

09:30 Stream 2: Dialectical thinking & dialectical methods

Reams, J. and Andersson, P. ***A Dialectical Method for Studying the Development of Emotional Resilience***

Background and Aim: Emotional burden can be from an imbalance between levels of stress and resilience. One response to this is to build emotional resilience. The Center for Transformative Leadership has developed a program aimed at achieving this, with support from the Norwegian Research Council to fund doctoral research on it. The program is based on a micro-developmental approach.

Method: The method involved is under development and the focus of this presentation. First, participants' textual responses to reflective prompts in the program are analyzed to understand their journey and identify key points to inquire into during a follow up interview. These key textual extracts are used to create a systemic mind map of key points. This is used during the interview as a form of dynamic scaffolding, enabling the co-exploration of the researcher's initial hypotheses about the participants' emotion resilience building journey.

Results: A pilot set of interviews were conducted to evolve this method. The response so far has shown that it; a) helps participants recall experiences and reflections, b) provides useful scaffolding, leading to c) new levels of insights into participants' experiences, and d) helping anchor new emotion regulation practices. Initial results have been promising.

Discussion and Implications: Compiling elements of a variety of methods involves many challenges. This approach aims to investigate how to foster more granular and robust sensemaking about emotional experiences that can lead to greater emotional resilience. Challenges include creating adequate data and a multi-step, co-creating research method, and applying a dialectical, micro-developmental lens to the data. The implication can be a new, rich method for understanding an important developmental process.

Palmo, S. et al. ***Coping with Climate Change Through Dialectical and Black-And-White thinking: Associations with Climate-Friendly Behavior Among Early Emerging Adults***

Young people are a vital stakeholder group in the fight against climate change. While many young people are concerned about climate change, this concern doesn't necessarily translate into action. Emerging adulthood is characterized by independent exploration, yet without responsibilities and social roles normative for adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Thus, emerging adults are an important target group in the context of sustainable behaviors. Identifying factors promoting climate-friendly behaviors among early emerging adults is essential to promote active engagement and resilience in this age group. Qualitative studies (Ojala, 2022a; 2022b) show that young people experience conflicts when trying to live more sustainably in our unsustainable society, and that they cope with these through dialectical thinking (i.e. thinking beyond the dichotomy of positive and negative aspects) and black-and-white thinking (i.e. either-or-thinking, which can take a from of perfectionism, for example). Our aim is to explore if these coping strategies are associated with climate-friendly food choices and climate-friendly behavior more generally while controlling for known predictors of pro-environmental behavior. We also investigate if these strategies moderate the relationship between perceived knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral outcomes.

We collected survey data from two cohorts of 16-22 years old emerging adults in Sweden (2020, 2022), with sample sizes of 470 and 559. Control variables included gender, parental norms, attitudes, perceived knowledge, and trust in science. Dialectical thinking was positively associated with climate-friendly food choices and behavior, while black-and-white thinking was negatively associated with both. These associations remained significant when accounting for control variables. Dialectical thinking also moderated the connection between perceived knowledge and food choices but not general behavior. Black-and-white thinking moderated relationships between knowledge and general behavior as well as attitudes and general behavior, but not food choices. This study is the first to show that coping through dialectical and black-and-white thinking are unique predictors of climate-friendly behavior and to a certain degree moderate the association between knowledge, attitudes and behavior. These coping strategies could be important when promoting climate-friendly behavior among early emerging adults.

Belolutskaya, A. ***Structural-dialectical approach to the development of creative thinking through the reflection on non-objective (non-representational) art***

Background and Aim:

Based on the structural-dialectical approach in psychology we define creativity as the ability to actualize a complex of cognitive and affective mechanisms, including dialectical, formal-logical and symbolic structures, to identify and transform highly uncertain problem situations to obtain new, original content.

Our aim was to explore the possibility for students to develop dialectical structures in their thinking by reflecting on items of non-objective art over the course of a three-hour training work at an exhibition.

We set the sample group the following tasks:

- to reveal personally significant meanings;
- to develop dialectical thinking working with contradictions.
- to reach the author's product as a result of solving the "open-start" problem (a situation of uncertainty when before starting to solve, one formulate the unique personally significant task first).

Method: Group resource training at the Moscow Multimedia Art Museum including three stages: symbolization, change of alternatives, open-start problem (6 participants, age: 23; 3 hours). Followed by 6 in-depth interviews to verify the effectiveness of the practice.

Results:

- Personal: manifestation and reframing of inner attitudes that were previously blocks for creative activity
- Cognitive: development of dialectical thinking, ability to symbolize and apply imagination

Discussion and Implications: Working with non-objective art allowed students to formulate personally significant contradictions that they were then motivated to transform into creative ideas. The symbols that were initially "negatively" charged from the participant's perspective were the most influential. These contained potential for further transformation and, accordingly, the expansion and restructuring of the space of possible ideas. Such developmental training could be used to develop people's creative potential, for example in psychological counseling, art schools, and more generally.

11:30 Stream 1: Different forms of learning in later life to support well-being

Balyasnikova, N. et al. ***Learning in the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing: Insights from Canada and the UK***

Background and Aim: It is notable that in the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing framework (World Health Organisation 2021), an emphasis on learning in the later stages of life is lacking and not sufficiently recognised to contribute positively to a person's well-being (Noble et al. 2021). Our presentation explores how learning contributes to healthy ageing and reinforces learning as an important aspect of the sustainably successful ageing process.

Method: The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing Framework has been reviewed and its position on learning appeared to be mainly situated as skills acquisition for the workforce. Yet, analysing research in educational gerontology, we found that learning has been conceptualised as a lifelong endeavour (Findsen & Formosa 2011, Hachem 2020, Kern 2018) and that it can contribute to a person's well-being as well as community well-being (Schoultz et al. 2020). We will present three illustrative cases of structured learning initiatives from the UK and Canada: a language learning program designed for older immigrants in Canada, a UK intergenerational somatic co-creation workshop in the context of sustainability, and a UK public educational campaign tailored to the multifaceted needs of ageing populations.

Results: By integrating the concept of well-being into thinking about learning in later life, our presentation demonstrates how inclusive, participatory approaches and co-production of tailored learning initiatives can powerfully contribute to healthy ageing across diverse groups. We conclude and argue for policy frameworks such as the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing to include different learning contexts that reflect the diverse needs and experiences of older adults.

Markowski, M. et al. ***The uses of peer learning in later life – an update on the pre-liminary results of a systematic review***

Background and Aim: Peer learning occurs among peers from similar social groupings, who are not professional teachers, helping each other to learn and learning themselves (Topping & Ehly, 1998). It is an educational approach in which learners with common characteristics (e.g. age, gender) or interests share or construct knowledge, build skill or change behaviour. Despite its roots in 'mutual aid universities' the concept has only recently been adopted for learning initiatives in later life (Midwinter, 2004, Glendenning 2024) as the Institutes of Lifelong Learning in North America and the University of the Third Age in Britain.

Aim: This multidisciplinary presentation outlines the preliminary findings from systematic review, registered in 2022 with Prospero (Vseteckova et al. 2022), and answers the main research question: What are the reported forms of peer learning for older adults?

Method: We systematically searched eight databases and retrieved 4,650 results. After screening and reviewing applying the inclusion / exclusion criteria 78 full text articles were included. Reference lists were reviewed and a further 7 articles were included in the textual narrative synthesis.

Results: Our synthesis organised the types of peer learning activities into five groups: structured training programme, peer mentoring, club-style activities, co-creation sessions and peer-based educational activism. The topics of those learning activities fall into three themes: "Health promotion", "Management of a health condition, either physical or mental health" and "General Education".

Discussion and Implications: Our study reveals a strong dominance on health promotion for the uses and research into peer learning initiatives. Further notable observations are 1) the quality of the evidence reported varies greatly, 2) despite encouraging peer-led practice, many of the activities are focused on remedying individual deficits and encouraging behaviour change and 3) Only few studies reported emancipatory learning, involving a form of co-creation.

Miles, J. ***Self-directed learning in later life: an autoethnographic sketch***

Self-direction is a foundational construct of adult learning, whether interpreted as a humanistic goal for the individual or as a collective aspiration for a population striving to overcome disadvantage and establish a common purpose. The concept risks being misrepresented on the one hand by an insistence that learning must take place outside institutions and on the other (particularly since the COVID-19 lockdowns) by being interpreted to mean learning in isolation. Whether written by radical theorists (Brookfield, S 2014), contemporary medical educators (Charokar et al., 2022) or quantification-focused researchers (Liao et al., 2023) the literature is weak on practice and the accounts of learners themselves. Here (with an emphasis on practice and performance) I review aspects of my experience as both learner and educator since I started a doctoral study at the age of 59. I touch on four contexts of concern: the relationship between self-direction, peer and tutor contributions; meaning and authority in the present crisis of trust; 'intergenerational' power shifts; the balance between social and physical constraints in later life. I reflect on a tendency to not so much learn 'new' things but to revisit and review unresolved matters from my late adolescence: playing the clarinet; poor swimming technique; and memorising English verse (rote learning as a mode of enquiry). While there are episodes of 'epiphany' (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011) I must confront the nagging anxiety that it is somehow all 'too late'.

11:30 Stream 2: Mechanisms and processes in real-world reasoning

Cavallaro, L. ***Problem-Based Learning to Prompt Vertical Development***

Background & Aim: Over two years in a master's level program, faculty examined the efficacy of replacing a traditional scholarly research paper with problem-based learning (PBL) to meet the academic requirements of a graduate certificate. PBL is a well-established educational methodology focused on practical application via student-directed learning and development activities built around a given problem.

The aim is to explore the potential student outcomes as a result of engaging in PBL, including how PBL may prompt, or foster an environment for, vertical development. Theoretical Approach

This proposal explores the compatibility of vertical development and problem-based learning. PBL requires students to make sense of complex problem environments in order to address novel challenges. Vertical development, or expanding cognitive capacity, occurs by illuminating the limits of current ways of thinking and creating new neural pathways. This enables us to make sense of the world in more cognitively and affectively sophisticated ways. As such, these two ideas are compatible, and the use of PBL in adult education spaces may be valuable in programs with vertical development objectives.

Conceptual Points

PBL may prompt, or foster an environment for, vertical development. It is less structured than traditional research, much like the real-world environments students will face. Students move from detached observers to active participants through experiential learning and hands-on project work. Especially in adult environments, PBL may enable vertical development outcomes.

PBL Approach	Developmental Outcome
Student-driven, collaborative Take on more complex projects	Meaning-making
Collective decisions - interpersonal challenges Task and role assignments - maintain accountability	Dialectical thinking
Experimentation, iteration Authentic tasks - real purposes, consequences, meaning [2]	Resilience

Discussion & Implications: PBL may be more effective for vertical development than more traditional educational methods. PBL can enable abilities relevant to vertical development: teamwork, project management, leadership, self-awareness, critical thinking and analysis, self-directed learning, real world application, and cross-disciplinary problem-solving. [3] Might future research explore how to: integrate PBL in adult classrooms, develop engaging problems, and design PBL for

vertical development? [1-3] Grossman et al., Core Practices for Project-Based Learning: A Guide for Teachers and Leaders, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021), pp. 11, 22.

Stammberger, I. & Mascolo, M. *How Distance Brings Us Closer to Solutions: Reasoning for Wisdom in Everyday Life*.

Background and Aim:

We report findings from interviews with 14 participants on The Wisdom Project (TWP), an interaction protocol designed to enhance reasoning about complex real-world projects such as launching a startup, managing a team, transitioning careers, navigating relationships, or parenting. Conducted over seven online sessions of two-hours each delivered to small groups, TWP offers participants a set of evidence-based concepts and techniques that serve as cognitive tools, i.e., human-made tools that support cognition. Activities include storytelling, visualization, dialogue, contemplation, and research-based problem-solving concepts and tools. TWP's theoretical background is the enactive approach to cognition, which attends to the emotional, embodied, social and cultural aspects of cognition.

Results

We present findings from interviews with fourteen participants conducted at four intervals—before, during, immediately after, and six months post-intervention. Participants reported progress in their chosen projects and showed improvements in perspective-taking, epistemic humility, adaptability to uncertainties, and prosocial attitudes, consistent with the research design's expectations.

Discussion and Implications

We claim that these outcomes stem from enactive distantiation, the strategy of intentionally stepping back from immediate perceptions, emotions, and thoughts to reason about a complex project from an emotional state of aspiration. In our discussion, we examine how enactive distantiation aligns with similar concepts from psychology, philosophy, sociology, art, anthropology, and religious studies, such as psychological distance, hermeneutical distantiation, critical distance, prophetic vision, shamanic trance state, and phenomenological epoché. We close by suggesting future research and applications.

Madl, T. *Causal Discovery in Adult Development: Identifying Effective Interventions by Developmental Stage*

Background and Aim. Determining which interventions effectively support development at different stages remains challenging. We employed causal discovery methods to identify which interventions may be most effective at each ego development stage.

Method. We analyzed hand-scored Sentence Completion Test data from two cohorts, scored in the tradition of Loevinger (1500 individuals) and Cook-Greuter (885 individuals). Using the former as a training set, we used a genetic algorithm combined with a custom-trained Large Language Model to evolve "maturity indicators" representing fundamental features of meaning-making (complexity tolerance, perspective-taking, ethical reasoning, etc.) that optimize developmental stage classification while maintaining psychological interpretability. We applied these "maturity indicator" models to the latter, more recent dataset, and applied a causal discovery method to identify effective interventions, comprising Bayesian Network structure learning combined with double machine learning to control for confounding variables. This allowed us to infer causal relationships and estimate intervention effects for different maturity indicators across developmental stages.

Results. (1) Maturity indicators facilitate automatic scoring with human-like accuracy (3% error between predicted and expert-scored Total Weighted Score, 85% exact stage agreement with expert human raters). (2) Cross-domain validation suggests they have validity beyond Ego Development Theory (less than 20% Mean Absolute Percentage Error at predicting EQ-i, Graduate Record Examinations, and Leadership scores), (3) learned causal models yield preliminary insights relevant to practitioners, e.g. the disproportionate importance of perspective taking at the post-conventional transition and socio-cultural as well as self-awareness at late post-conventional stages.

Discussion and Implications. Our methodology opens the door towards empirically-grounded guidance for stage-appropriate developmental interventions in the field of adult development. For practitioners, our results are a step towards tailored approaches based on clients' current developmental stage, with specific focus on the most impactful maturity indicators for that stage - a significant step towards precision developmental support.

13:30 Stream 1: Transitions and Stages in Older Adulthood

Yarwood, B. et al. ***Alone time in the golden age: Pre-retiree and retiree experiences of solitude***

Background/aim

Understanding the conditions that shape positive experiences of solitude in old age can highlight the value of solitude during retirement (Ost Mor et al., 2021), particularly because of the increased risks of isolation due to poor health. This research aims to better understand how retirement shapes peoples' perceptions and experiences of their solitude. Are people cognitively and socially equipped to manage the increase in solitude during retirement?

Method

We conducted semi-structured individual and focus group interviews with 23 older people (aged 58-65) in the UK who were planning to retire or had recently retired. Building on the theory of planned behaviour framework, interview questions were generated to capture how attitudes, social norms and perceived control shape retirees' plans on approaching increased solitude in retirement. Qualitative data was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Results

Retirement is a complicated experience that brings with it benefits and challenges. Discontinuing work enriched the life of older adults in multiple ways, but also led to challenges. Retirees found an increased appreciation of solitude and self-growth from more time alone. However, an increase in solitude sometimes made people feel isolated and lost. Resilience factors which helped retirees to mitigate negative aspects of solitude were identified.

Discussion/implications

This research deepens existing understanding of thoughts and experiences related to solitude and retirement. The findings of this study support the journey of retirement as a critical life transition, and reveal insights into the decisions around the way retirees navigate both time alone and time spent with others. As such, further research is needed to understand the day-to-day activities that shape retirees' alone time.

Kokko, K. & Reinilä, E. ***The beginning of late adulthood: A phase of losses or increasing well-being?***

Background and aim: In classic theories of adult and life-span psychology, age 60+ traditionally marks the beginning of a period variously referred to as "late adulthood," "late maturity," or "older adulthood." These theories predominantly emphasize losses and declines in well-being. Erikson considered generativity the main developmental task of late adulthood. The present study aimed to examine the development of well-being and generativity from mid-adulthood to the beginning of late adulthood.

Method: The analyses were based on the Jyväskylä Longitudinal Study of Personality and Social Development where the same, initially 8-year-old, participants (N = 369) have been by now followed until age 61 (N = 206). At age 61, the participants still represented well the initial random sample and their respective Finnish age cohort (Kokko et al., 2024). We utilized information about generativity and well-being at ages 42, 50, and 61, and analyzed dierences in their means across time using t-tests. More advanced analyses will be shown in the presentation.

Results: Happiness and social well-being increased from age 42 to 50 and life satisfaction from age 50 to 61 (Reinilä et al., 2023). There were no changes in psychological well-being or depressive symptoms over time. Furthermore, generativity decreased from age 42 to 50 and, again, from 50 to 60 (Reinilä et al., 2023). Discussion and implications: The present results indicate that instead of losses, late adulthood is quite a psychologically satisfying phase of life. They also show, as implied by decreasing generativity, that generativity may not capture essential elements of optimal psychological functioning. Considering that people today stay healthier and live longer than ever before, existing theories of adult development may need updating. Furthermore, new indicators of good — or even optimal — psychological functioning suitable for individuals aged 60 and over may be needed, in addition to existing measures of generativity.

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Wichers, B. ***Stages of Consciousness Development in Ageing - from Prepersonal to Transpersonal***

Background and Aim: Presentation of a model of diQerent expression of consciousness development in ageing as an interim result of my research on the phenomenon of the dissolution of the self in ageing

Mixed Methods: In my ongoing research, I am bringing, among other things, observations from years of professional witnessing of people with dementia, phenomenological insights from my own consciousness development process, data from interviews about the phenomenon of the dissolution of the self with relatives of people with dementia and with people with extraordinary consciousness experiences, together with insights from gerontological theories about successful aging, transpersonal psychology and adult development models.

Results: The data and findings available to date on the phenomenon of the dissolution of the self in ageing indicate that this could be a normal phenomenon, beginning in early age, that has not been considered by research so far. This phenomenon, which involves the increasing dissolution of the previous personal identity, can, depending on its expression and progression (sudden vs. gradual), have an unsettling, disturbing or even confusing and frightening eQect. My own experiences (as a gerontologist and dementia specialist) in such a process with a radical onset showed phenomena that were very similar to dementia symptoms, with a fully preserved mind and assessments in two diQerent developmental models that point to a simultaneous transpersonal develop-ment of consciousness. Retrospective interviews with relatives of people with dementia show phenomena of self-dissolution long before the clinical picture of dementia, sometimes combined with expressions of concern, insecurity, and even symptoms of depression and suicide, for which the dissolution phenomena may have been decisive.

Discussion: If we start from the model of transpersonal psychology of a prepersonal, a personal and a transpersonal stage of consciousness, these diQerent findings – combined with gerontological theories of ageing and Tornstam's model of gerotranscendence – can be categorised into a developmental model that, starting from the fully developed persona as an expression of the 'fully functioning person' (C. Rogers) in the ageing process, as well as a regression into the pre-personal dimension of consciousness through unconscious self-dissolution (dementia) as well as a development into the transpersonal dimension of consciousness through conscious self-dissolution (gerotranscendence and beyond).

13:30 Stream 2: Stage development and contemplative practices

Angerer, R. & Rae, R. *Lectical Assessments & Stages of Transcendental Pluralism: An Attempt in Finding Correlations*

Background and Aim:

This study explored the correlation between the Lectical Assessment System (LAS) and Stages of Transcendental Pluralism (TP), two models assessing stages of cognitive development. The research aims to determine whether LAS's levels of hierarchical complexity align with the trajectory of TP, which is based on an idea of transcendental media that show up in linguistic patterns. The motivation behind this study was to validate TP as an alternative developmental model and compare its precision with an established framework like LAS.

Method:

The study involved re-scoring developmental assessments from previous research (Heikkinen, 2014; Van Rossum, 2013) using TP's methodology, which analyzes grammatical structures and themes within a thematic-rhematic field. After a theoretical comparison of both, their correlations were statistically evaluated using percentage agreement between LAS levels and TP stages. Given that TP distinguishes between two different developmental trajectories we additionally looked whether the LAS shows any bias to either of them.

Results:

Findings show an almost perfect correlation (95.89%) between LAS levels and TP stages, particularly for Lectical Levels 9-12 and Stages 2.4-3.3 of TP. A strong correlation (83.74%) was observed between LAS's lectical phases and TP's grammatical quarters. The study also found no systematic bias regarding the typological trajectories in LAS scoring.

Discussion and Implications:

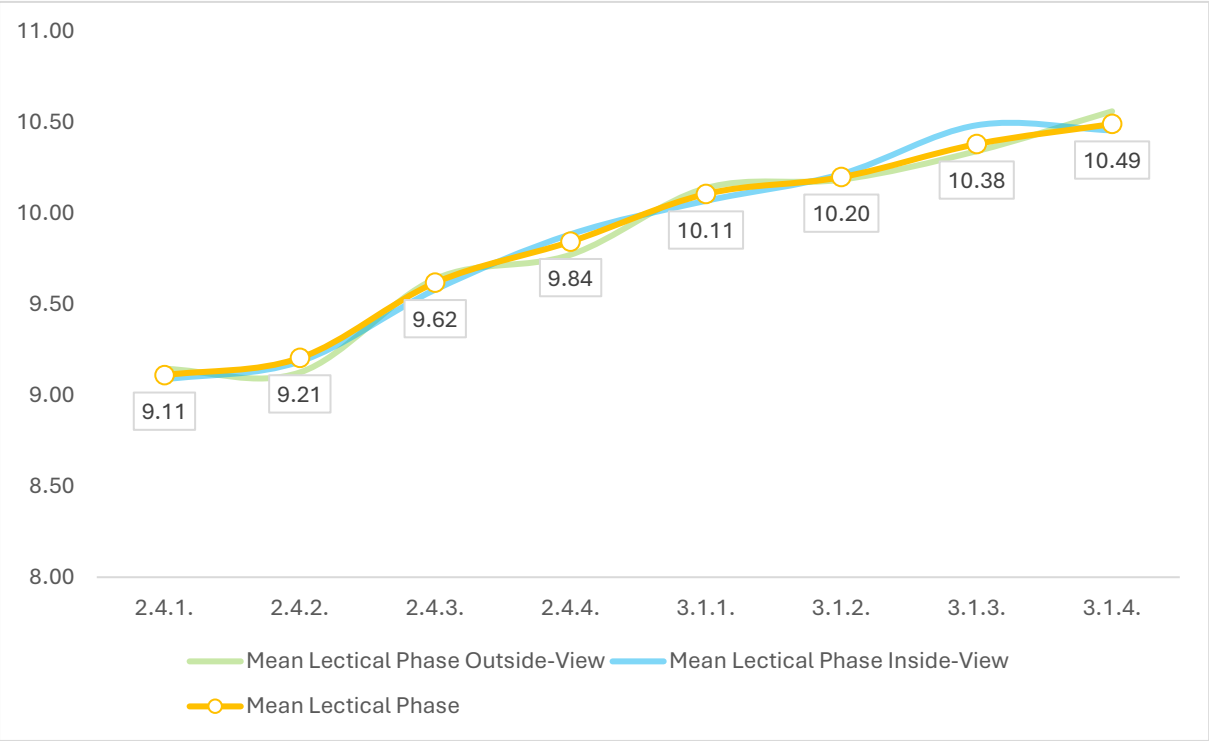

Figure 1: Comparison of Mean Lectical Phases with Transcendental Pluralisms Typological Trajectories: Inside-View and the Outside-View

The results suggest that TP offers a reliable and systematic approach to assessing levels of hierarchical complexity, potentially addressing some of LAS's limitations. By incorporating universal grammar structures, TP may provide a linguistically rooted framework for evaluating development that is more evenly distributed. In the future a more systematic and thorough study should be aimed at to see whether the findings of this limited study are generalizable.

Ooms. *The Neurophenomenology of Stages: A QEEG Case Study on the Stages of Transcendental Pluralism*

Background and Aim: Jean Piaget, in Biology and Knowledge, proposed that cognitive processes emerge from organic autoregulation and serve as highly differentiated mechanisms of adaptation. Similarly, Roman Angerer's Transcendental Pluralism (TP) conceptualizes neuronal structures as transcendentals underlying all mental processes. This study seeks to illuminate the relationship between internal access to developmental stages and shifts in the global workspace of the brain.

Method: Our research employs a neurophenomenological approach, where the developer of TP accesses developmental stages through meditation while connected to a 16-channel EEG, providing real-time insight into the brain's global workspace dynamics.

The gathered data is analyzed through lagged coherence in Robert Thatcher`s NeuroGuide. This metric distinguishes genuine neural communication, offering a detailed view of brain interactions. Topographic displays visualize the connectivity.

Results: The most significant findings emerge from comparing three TP layers – Secondness (life), Thirdness (mind), and Fourthness (spirit) – each accessed through a layer specific meditation: breath focus (Secondness), complex reasoning (Thirdness), and witnessing the effortless flow of complex reasoning (Fourthness). Delta (0.5–4 Hz) increased across all stages, linked to interoception, self-regulation, and the witnessing state. Theta (4–7 Hz) increased, peaking in the rostral prefrontal cortex (BA10), which in our phenomenological approach likely echoes the effortless contemplation of complex thought in a quasi-visual space. Beta 2 (20–30 Hz) first shifted from the sensorimotor cortex (breathing) to the left ventral pfc, indicating active monitoring of thought processes in complex reasoning. Overall, increasing precuneus activity at later stages, likely reflects heightened awareness and cognitive integration.

Discussion and Implications: This study is based on a single participant using model-specific techniques, raising questions about variability, state vs. trait differences, and universal patterns in human cognition. As an early-stage investigation, our focus is on refining research methods and evaluation techniques that reveal significant differences. These insights may later be applied to a larger population.

Murray, G. ***Mechanisms of Growth: Decentering, Contemplative Practice, and the Reconstruction of Meaning in Adulthood***

Background and Aim:

Adult developmental theories such as Kegan's subject-object model describe growth as the process of becoming aware of meaning structures that one was previously embedded in. However, the specific mechanisms that enable these transformations remain under-specified. This presentation proposes that "decentering" serves as such a mechanism. Defined as meta-awareness, disidentification from experience, and reduced reactivity to thought content, decentering enables subject-object transitions by creating the psychological distance needed to reflect on formerly embedded meaning structures. Further, I argue that contemplative practices accelerate this process by cultivating and stabilizing decentering over time. Drawing on enactivist cognitive science, I suggest that adults' developmental shifts require not only reflection but the embodied reorganization of one's felt sense of identity and meaning provided by decentering.

Theoretical Approach:

Kegan describes how development occurs through subject-object transformations: we move from being "run by, identified with, fused with" aspects of our inner life to being able to "look at, reflect upon, take responsibility for" and integrate them into a broader way of knowing (1982:45). This process marks an emergence from embeddedness and supports the development of complexity from a socialized mind to the self-authored and self-transforming orders of mind. This emergence is

enabled by decentering, as a metacognitive process that shifts one's perspective "from within subjective experience onto that experience," enabling a person to observe internal states objectively rather than remain fused with them. This process mirrors the structure of developmental movement described by Kegan. The process model of decentering (Bernstein, et al. 2015) outlines how meta-awareness initiates disidentification from internal experience and reduced reactivity to thought content, each of which reinforces the other and deepens the capacity to decenter. Researchers provide evidence of that a significant number of constructs common to contemplative practices fall under the process model of decentering.

1 Those constructs are decentering, metacognitive awareness, cognitive distancing, reperceiving, mindfulness, metacognitive mode and detached mindfulness, cognitive defusion, self-as-context, and self-distanced perspective.

Enactivist cognitive science deepens our understanding of Kegan's descriptions of embeddedness and underscores the importance of decentering by showing that meaning arisesthrough embodied, affectively charged interaction with the environment (Gallagher, 2017; Maiese, 2017). From this perspective, our felt sense of identity is enacted through pre-reflective, affective patterns that guide perception, motivation, and behavior and are tightly coupled with sensorimotor habits. This helps explain why meaning systems are difficult to change through reflection alone. Contemplative practices interrupt these patterns by leveraging decentering to bring habitual responses into awareness, allowing them to be observed rather than enacted. Over time, this loosens the grip of automatic patterns and creates space for new ways of being to emerge. In this sense, decentering mediates the embodied reorganization necessary for developmental transformation.

Key Conceptual Points:

Below I present evidence that decentering is a trainable, durable capacity and explain how contemplative practices accelerate both its development and transformative consequences. I further present evidence that decentering mediates developmental changes in meaning-making, including self-identity, and provide neuroscientific explanations for these changes.

1. Decentering is a Trainable and Durable Capacity with Contemplative Practice

Decentering is a central salutary mechanism cultivated in mindfulness-based interventions (see Britton, et al. 2021 for review). Segal, et al. (2019) describe how mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) instills decentering as a durable capacity. In the early modules, focused attention and bodily awareness practices (e.g., breath meditation, body scans) continuously train meta-awareness, helping participants detect and label arising sensations. Later sessions emphasize choiceless awareness, encouraging a non-avoidant observation of difficult emotions— directly strengthening disidentification (observing thoughts/feelings as events, rather than identifying with them). The explicit focus on self-compassion and clarifying values further reduces automatic reactivity to thought content by reframing unpleasant thoughts and emotions as workable experiences.

Over time, these integrated practices establish a steady accumulation of decentering. In a 24-month follow-up, Segal, et al. (2019) found that sustained mindfulness practice through MBCT led to increases in decentering, which predicted reduced risk of depressive relapse. Hamilton and Barnhofer (2024) utilized longitudinal modeling to show a cumulative trajectory of decentering growth through MBCT, with earlier gains predicting later symptom reductions. Both studies show that contemplative practice stabilizes decentering as a durable capacity.

2. Decentering Mediates Structural Change in Motivation, Identity, and Self-Understanding

While studies on adult development and contemplative practice remain sparse, an emerging body of evidence suggests that decentering initiates structural changes similar to those described by Kegan's constructive-developmental stage model. In qualitative work by Christopher et al. (2011), participants who are four

years removed from mindfulness training report stabilized, autonomous identities, high levels of emotion regulation, and an ability to “stand back” from and change relational patterns. Franquesa et al (2017) found that decentering mediated the relationship between meditation and alignment with personal values and life fulfillment, and further research employed structural equation modeling to show that decentering mediated a shift towards intrinsic goals and autonomous motivation, ultimately predicting eudaimonic well-being (He et al. 2024). These results suggest that decentering enables psychological processes characteristic of Kegan’s “self-authored” order of mind, which describes an individual who responds to social demands from an internal seat of authority, self-regulating emotion around his or her own motivations and value system.

De Oliveira et al. (2024) found that meta-awareness and disidentification mediated the link between contemplative practice and both self-transcendent emotions and interconnected identity. Rathore’s (2023) study of 509 participants found that mindfulness practitioners reported higher decentering and higher self-transcendence, with decentering partially mediating the relationship between mindfulness practice and self-transcendence. Notably, meta-awareness emerged as the key driver of this effect. These findings suggest that decentering supports the psychological integration described by Kegan’s “self-transforming” order of mind, when a person experiences interdependence between self and other and transcendence of the solidified self. The studies above highlight how the process of decentering reorganizes participants’ experiences of their goals, self-identities, relationships, motivations, and emotional experiences towards greater complexity and wisdom.

3. Decentering Functions as a Hub in a System of Self-Regulatory Change

Emerging neuroscientific evidence robustly supports decentering as a central node in the self- regulatory network, significantly restructuring cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes. Schuman-Olivier et al. (2020) synthesize neuroscience and psychological research into a coherent model of "mindful self-regulation," identifying decentering as critical for extinction learning, emotion differentiation, and internalization of motivation—processes essential for lasting shifts in identity structures and behavior. These processes reveal how repeated contemplative practice actively rewires core neural circuits involved in self-regulation. Bernstein et al. (2015) provide evidence that each of decentering’s metacognitive components is linked to distinct neural substrates: meta-awareness is correlated with activation in salience and executive control networks (anterior insula, dorsal anterior cingulate cortex), disidentification with decreased default mode network activity (medial prefrontal cortex, posterior cingulate cortex), and reduced reactivity with diminished amygdala activation. Crucially, these neural changes are not isolated effects; they represent dynamic and interactive shifts that build progressively. Enhanced meta-awareness supports stronger disidentification, subsequently reducing emotional reactivity, creating a reinforcing cycle that amplifies the effectiveness and durability of decentering over time.

Thus, the neuroscience clearly articulates how contemplative practice does not simply train isolated cognitive skills but instead strategically engages multiple interrelated neural systems. Through repeated activation, this network synergy creates a robust neuropsychological foundation for developmental transformation.

Discussion and Implications:

This work positions decentering as a metacognitive mechanism for adult developmental transformation. By integrating enactivism, developmental theory, and contemplative science, it shows how contemplative practices cultivate decentering as a metacognitive capacity that enables the disembedding from subjective experience towards structural changes in adult meaning-making. While existing research on decentering has not explicitly examined developmental stage change, the evidence suggests that it provides the scaffolding necessary for such shifts. Decentering bolsters reflective methods (see Kegan & Lahey, 2010) by disrupting automatic identification with subjective experience, making it available for reflection. This reconceptualization has implications for the inclusion of contemplative practices in education, professional development, and coaching aimed at transformation and long-term psychological growth.

15:00: Keynote Interview

Arnett, J, J. ***Building resilience in young adults and the future of adult development***

Dr Arnett will be interviewed about his views on the future of adult development research, on his current and future research projects and on what his work points to being the foundations for resilience in adulthood.

Biography: Prof Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, PhD. is a Senior Research Scholar in the Department of Psychology at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. He has also taught at the University of Missouri. During 2005 he was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Dr. Arnett earned a B.S. in psychology from Michigan State University in 1980, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Virginia in 1985 and 1986. He was the Founding President and first Executive Director of the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood (SSEA) and he is the author of the book Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties, published by Oxford University Press in 2004. The 2nd edition was published in 2015 and the 3rd edition in 2024. He is also co-author (with Lene Jensen) of four textbooks, including the most widely used textbook on adolescence, Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach (2023, Pearson Education, 7th edition). In addition to emerging adulthood, his other scholarly interests include promoting a more culturally inclusive psychology; adolescents' risk behavior; media use in adolescence; and adolescents' responses to cigarette advertising.