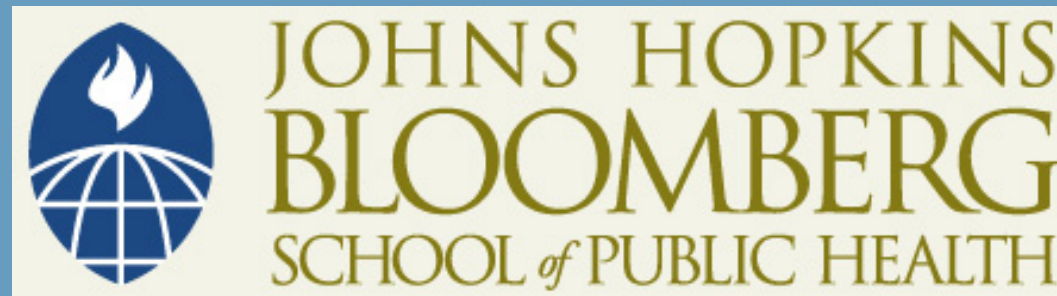


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Section D

Why Use a Life Course Perspective in Public Health?

Life Course Perspective

- Conceptualizes health as the reflection of an underlying developmental trajectory
- Trajectory is multidimensional
 - Biological, psychological, behavioral, and social aspects
 - These domains are intertwined and interact
- What “health” means varies by position on this developmental trajectory (i.e., by age)

Life Course Perspective

- Developmental trajectories, and thus health, reflect relationships between an individual and the contexts in which he or she is embedded
- Ultimate goal is to understand the biological, psychological, behavioral, and social processes linking contexts and health

Life Course Perspective

- Is a theoretical orientation
- Provides a general conceptual framework for understanding health and its determinants
- General conceptual framework may be applied to specific outcomes or problems

Conceptual Frameworks

- Tool for thinking clearly about inherently complex problems
- Though abstract, makes problem concrete
- Shows interrelationships among predictors and how they lead to outcome—diagrams a process

Advantages of Life Course Approach

- Big picture, highlights connections—important to public health mission

Advantages of Life Course Approach

- Thinking about pathways helps to identify where to break “chains of risk,” alter probabilities

Advantages of Life Course Approach

- Allows focus on positive human development

A Journey Through the Life Course

- Fetal period
- Infancy and early childhood
- School age and adolescence
- Adulthood
- Later life

Developing Your Own Conceptual Framework

- Assignment 1: choose health measure of relevance to public health
 - Onset of Type II diabetes
 - Maternal mortality
 - Breast cancer screening

Developing Your Own Conceptual Framework

- Assignment 2: literature review
- Assignment 3: present and explain conceptual framework