Activity theory

An interactionist theory of aging that suggests that elderly people who remain active and socially involved will be best-adjusted.

Ageism

Prejudice and discrimination based on a person’s age.


**Disengagement theory**

A functionalist theory of aging that implicitly suggests that society and the aging individual mutually sever many of their relationships.

**Expressiveness**

Concern for maintenance of harmony and the internal emotional affairs of the family.

**Gender role**

Expectations regarding the proper behavior, attitudes, and activities of males and females.
Gerontology

The scientific study of the sociological and psychological aspects of aging and the problems of the aged.

Glass ceiling

An invisible barrier that blocks the promotion of a qualified individual in a work environment because of the individual's gender, race, or ethnicity.

Homophobia

Fear of and prejudice against homosexuality.
Hospice care

Treatment of the terminally ill in their own homes, or in special hospital units or other facilities, with the goal of helping them to die easily, without pain.

Institutional discrimination

The denial of opportunities and equal rights to individuals and groups that results from the normal operations of a society.

Instrumentality

An emphasis on tasks, a focus on more distant goals, and a concern for the external relationship between one’s family and other social institutions.
Midlife crisis

A stressful period of self-evaluation that begins at about age 40.

Sandwich generation

The generation of adults who simultaneously try to meet the competing needs of their parents and their children.

Second shift

The double burden—work outside the home followed by child care and housework—that many women face and few men share equitably.
Sexism

The ideology that one sex is superior to the other.

Sexual harassment

Behavior that occurs when work benefits are made contingent on sexual favors (as a quid pro quo), or when touching, lewd comments, or exhibition of pornographic material creates a “hostile environment” in the workplace.