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SEX, CRIME, DRUGS, AND JUST PLAIN STUPID BEHAVIORS

The New Face of Young
Adulthood in America

Christopher Salvatore



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This book is dedicated to W.K. who selflessly supported me throughout my own emerging adulthood and whose friendship, wisdom, and love saved me from myself on countless occasions. I look forward to the day I see you again.

PREFACE

When I pick up a book, I often wonder, “why should I read this?” Will this give me an insight into myself, society? Will it entertain me? Am I just being assigned this book to fill time in my class? This book may do a little of these and more. Many of us have experienced or have experience with emerging adults, yet few of us understand what emerging adulthood is and how it shapes our behavior and lives. Much of what has been written about emerging adulthood has been in siloed disciplines that often don’t interact or overlap with each other. As a result, students or practitioners in one field may be well versed in emerging adulthood, whereas others may have little knowledge or exposure. It may be even worse for parents or emerging adults themselves who know in their gut there is something ‘different’ about the lives of young people today, they just can’t put their finger on it. This book is for these people: students, practitioners, professors, and even people in ‘real life’ who want a better understanding of what emerging adulthood is, how it shapes the behavior of young people, especially why so many of them seem to be floundering in life, experimenting with drugs and alcohol, sex, or other dangerous behaviors, or simply don’t seem to be ‘growing up’ in the same way as past generations.

My journey to understand and educate about emerging adulthood began in 2006. I was a graduate student taking a class in Life Course Criminology. As we worked through the material I came across a reference to something called ‘emerging adulthood.’ I had never heard the term before but was instantly intrigued. I quickly downloaded the article written by Jeffrey Arnett and was fascinated. This ‘emerging adulthood’ explained so much of what I had experienced in my own young adulthood

and I saw many of the behaviors he was discussing in many of my fellow students. I knew emerging adulthood was important and should be integrated into the criminological discourse. I have worked diligently through a series of publications and presentations to help spread the word about emerging adulthood. This book represents the culmination of those efforts and in many respects a dream project, a chance to provide a guidebook, if you will, to emerging adulthood that works across audiences and disciplines and written with the express goal of connecting the audience on both an academic and personal level.

It is my fondest hope you will gain an understanding of emerging adulthood and its influence on your life, and the life of those around you—thanks for reading!

Montclair, NJ, USA

Christopher Salvatore

CONTENTS

1	Introduction to Emerging Adulthood	1
2	The Changing Path to Adulthood	9
3	Emerging Adulthood: A Time of Instability, Exploration, and Change	19
4	Emerging Adults and Changing Values: Religion and Morality During Emerging Adulthood	31
5	How Marriage/Romance, Parenting, Education, and Work Are Different for Emerging Adults	41
6	Emerging Adults and Risky and Dangerous Behaviors	55
7	Emerging Adults and Illegal Drugs/Substance Use	65

8	Emerging Adults and Criminal Offending	73
9	Implications for Policy and Change	81
10	Conclusions	89
	Index	93

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 2.1	Number of 25-year-olds with college education by gender 1975–2015. (*Numbers in thousands. **Data adapted from https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/educational-attainment/time-series/cps-historical-time-series/ta-1.xlsx)	11
Fig. 2.2	Estimated median age at first marriage by gender 1975–2015. (Data adapted from: https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/families/time-series/marital/ms2.xls)	12
Fig. 2.3	Emerging adulthood gap conceptual model	16
Fig. 3.1	Young adults living with spouses vs. parents 1975 compared to 2016 (in millions). (Adapted from US Census Bureau, 1975 and 2016 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement)	23
Fig. 5.1	Average age of first-time mother* and father** 2000–2014*. (*Adapted from Mean age of mothers is on the rise: United States, 2000–2014, available at: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db232.htm ; ** https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr051.pdf)	44
Fig. 5.2	Median weekly earnings by level of educational attainment by gender for full-time workers age 25 and over in first decline of 2017. (Adapted from https://www.bls.gov/news.release/wkyeng.t05.htm)	50

- Fig. 6.1 Percentage of students and adult smoking in the United States 1993–2014. (Adapted from https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/tables/trends/cig_smoking/index.htm) 58
- Fig. 6.2 Chlamydia—reported rates per 100,000 population by age group and sex, United States, 2010. (Adapted from <https://www.cdc.gov/std/stats10/tables/10.htm>) 60

Introduction to Emerging Adulthood

Abstract What is emerging adulthood? How did it come about? How does it impact the behavior of young people in modern society? Here we introduce these ideas: major concepts are introduced and emerging adulthood is explained in the context of other cohort-based generations. An outline plan of this book is presented by chapter.

Keywords Emerging adulthood • Crime • STDs • Generation • College • Parenting

“But mom you don’t understand, things are different from when you were my age,” “I just can’t understand how I am so far behind where my parents were at my age,” “Just because I’m over 18 doesn’t mean I’m not a kid, I’m a long way from being a grown up.” You’ve probably heard someone in your life say something along the lines of one of the sentences above, or perhaps said them yourself. I’ve done both, sometimes in the same conversation. The thing is, every generation faces challenges and issues. The ‘Greatest Generation’ faced World War II and the Depression, the ‘Me’ generation of the 1970s dealt with social and civil unrest and conflicts over the Vietnam War. ‘Generation X’ faced a plethora of plaid clothing and the dour prospect of downward mobility relative to their parents. Millennials cope with helicopter parents, spiking rates of STDs, and fascination with the modern-day mirror known as the selfie. These are

just a few examples that demonstrate that every generation of young people faces a distinct set of challenges. Some challenges and changes overlap with generations: one such case is the development of emerging adulthood, a unique stage of the life course brought about by a set of social changes we will be exploring throughout this book.

What's interesting about emerging adulthood is that it hasn't just impacted one generation; in fact emerging adulthood was most likely first experienced by those born in 1960 up to today. Emerging adulthood may be the reason it feels it took or is taking you so long to become a 'real' adult perhaps marked by getting married, purchasing your own home, getting your own apartment, finally finishing college, or having your first child. Emerging adulthood may help explain why so many of your friends are experimenting with their sexuality, trying drugs, or simply not doing much at all. Perhaps you are a parent of an emerging adult, wondering why it's taking your child so long to get their act together and still living in your home well after they have graduated college and started working. You may even be wondering if you will ever have that 'empty nest' you always heard so much about on TV and in parenting magazines.

For most people in Western nations like the United States, the period of the late teen years through the early twenties has always been one of change and importance. For most, it was when they were completing their higher education, chose their professions, established romantic partnerships, and by the late twenties most were relatively established in these areas (Arnett, 2000).

You are probably wondering what is 'emerging adulthood'? How did it come about? What is it about being an 'emerging adult' that makes someone more likely to binge drink, experiment with drugs, have unsafe sex, and do generally stupid or dangerous things you think someone would have grown out of by the time they were 18? These are the questions we will be exploring in this book.

Emerging adulthood is a theory originally presented by Jeffrey Jenson Arnett in 1994 to describe the period between adolescence and young adulthood, between about 18 and 25, though some have argued it can extend far beyond the age of 25 (Salvatore, 2013). Arnett (2015) eventually expanded the age range of emerging adulthood from 18 until 29, though many still focus on the 'classic' 18- to 25-year-old age range. What is important to understand about emerging adulthood is that it is a unique developmental stage: it isn't adolescence, and it's not young adulthood. The theory of emerging adulthood focuses on the psychological and sub-

jective experiences of those in emerging adulthood. There are specific factors that characterize emerging adulthood. First, is a feeling of being ‘in between,’ reflecting no longer being an adolescent, but not being a young adult. Next, is identity exploration in several areas including romantic and sexual relationships, employment, and substance use. Third, is instability: emerging adulthood is a time of a lot of vacillation and change, reflective of the identity exploration so common in emerging adults. Fourth, it’s a time of self-focus and self-interest, and finally, it is a period marked by possibility (Arnett, 2005, 2015; Tanner & Arnett, 2009).

So why does emerging adulthood lead to ‘bad’ behavior? This is a question we will be exploring throughout this book, examining the complex role of social controls, missed turning points, and social bonds. But the short answer is that during emerging adulthood individuals are no longer subjected to teacher or parental controls compared to childhood and the earlier years of adolescence, yet they have not established permanent romantic relationships or bonds with employers and coworkers that can act to inhibit antisocial behaviors. The increased freedom of emerging adulthood provides opportunities to engage in identity exploration through sexual and substance use experimentation (Arnett, 1998; Tucker, Ellickson, Orlando, Martino, & Klein, 2005; White & Jackson, 2004; White et al., 2006). In other words, unlike high school students, those in emerging adulthood do not have parents and teachers to prevent them from engaging in risky and dangerous behaviors.

PLAN OF THIS BOOK

As stated above, the purpose of this book is to provide the reader an understanding of emerging adulthood, how it has come about, how it is characterized, and why we see sexual experimentation, criminal offending, substance use, and other ‘stupid’ behaviors during this period. This is useful for students in classes in criminology, criminal justice, justice studies, sociology, social psychology, psychology, and other related fields. It will provide these students an insight into their own lives and the lives of their peers. This book is also a resource for parents, professors, and practitioners in the above fields, helping them to understand the unique experiences of emerging adults—hey, it may even provide them with a better understanding of their own emerging adulthood even if they didn’t know they were experiencing emerging adulthood at the time. Please note this book is not meant to be a complete and total resource for emerging adulthood. It is

conceptualized as a reader, providing a summary of many of the key issues and behaviors most relevant to the disciplines and audiences mentioned above. For those of you seeking more information, please see the reference lists at the end of each chapter. They give direction on detailed studies and reports. Also feel free to contact the author—he would be happy to provide guidance for those seeking more information.

Below is a listing and summary of each chapter.

Chapter 2—The Changing Path to Adulthood. Chapter 2 will provide an overview of emerging adulthood and how it has altered the path to adulthood including:

- How emerging adulthood happened—provides an overview of the social changes that have led to the evolution of emerging adulthood as a distinct stage of the life course.
- Emerging adulthood defined—defines emerging adulthood.
- Emerging adulthood is not young adulthood or adolescence—juxtaposes emerging adulthood with adolescence and young adulthood, providing a detailed discussion of how emerging adulthood is distinct, and an explanation as to why emerging adults are likely to engage in risky, dangerous, and sometimes stupid behaviors.

Chapter 3—Emerging Adulthood: A Time of Instability, Exploration, and Change. This chapter explores the core tenets of Emerging Adulthood in depth.

- Provides an in-depth exploration of emerging adulthood’s main characteristics including identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling ‘in between,’ and how emerging adulthood is an age of possibility.

Chapter 4—Emerging Adults and Changing Values: Religion and Morality During Emerging Adulthood. This chapter examines how emerging adults view religion and morality.

- Provides a discussion of the views of emerging adulthood regarding religion and examines rates of religious participation and types of religious affiliation.
- Examines how emerging adults conceptualize morality in the context of modern society.

Chapter 5—How Marriage/Romance, Parenting, Education, and Work Are Different for Emerging Adults. This chapter provides an in-depth look at how changes in four key areas—marriage, parenthood, education, and employment—have led to emerging adulthood and decreased the social controls which traditionally would have inhibited offending and risky/dangerous behaviors in young adults.

- Changes in marriage/romantic relationships—examines the role of marriage/romantic relationships as an informal social control; provides an overview of changing trends in marriage/romantic relationships, and trends in marriage in emerging adulthood/romantic relationships.
- Changes in parenthood—examines the role of parenthood as an informal social control; provides an overview of changes in parenthood and how they influence emerging adults and their behavior.
- Changes in education—explores changes in education (e.g., the commodification of education), peer pressure in college, and instability/change in education.
- Changing nature of employment—assesses how employment and work have traditionally operated to change behavior, and how changes in employment/work are influencing the behavior of emerging adults.

Chapter 6—Emerging Adults and Risky and Dangerous Behaviors. This chapter explores risky and dangerous behaviors during emerging adulthood.

- Looks at unsafe sex practices, drunk driving, and binge drinking, and provides an examination of sensation seeking and identity exploration as motivations for these behaviors.
- Examines the costs and consequences of these behaviors including rates of sexually transmitted infections.

Chapter 7—Emerging Adults and Illegal Drugs/Substance Use. This chapter examines patterns of illegal drug use in emerging adults.

- Explores patterns of substance use in emerging adults including illicit drugs and prescription drugs.

- Studies the costs and consequences of these behaviors including rates of arrest for crime related to substance use, rates of addiction, and deaths due to overdoses.

Chapter 8—Emerging Adults and Criminal Offending. This chapter specifically focuses on the criminal offending of those in emerging adulthood.

- Explores rates of offending during emerging adulthood, and assesses the existing evidence regarding the influence of emerging adulthood on criminal offending.
- Examines how some may continue to offend past adolescence (where most desist) due to emerging adulthood.
- Assesses how traditional turning points and social bonds (e.g., marriage, parenthood, military service) influence offending during emerging adulthood.

Chapter 9—Implications for Policy and Change. This chapter examines potential policy changes and ways to cope with the risky/dangerous, substance use, and criminal behaviors found in emerging adults.

- Recommendations for public policy.
- Recommendations for the criminal justice system.
- Recommendations for institutions (colleges/universities).

Chapter 10—Conclusions. In the closing chapter key summary points will be provided and key points examined.

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The Changing Path to Adulthood

Abstract Emerging adulthood evolved as a distinct stage of the life course due to changes in several key areas. These areas include economic shifts, increased freedom for women, increased sexual freedom, and the Youth Movement. Each of these areas is examined, and the influence they have on emerging adulthood discussed and emerging adulthood formally defined. The emerging adulthood gap is presented as a conceptual idea that can help explain behaviors common in emerging adult populations.

Keywords Emerging adulthood • Emerging adulthood gap • Economics • Sexual freedom • Women's rights • Youth movement

How did emerging adulthood come about and what could have caused such a radical shift in the conceptualization and experience of the late teens and early twenties? How do we define emerging adulthood? What is it about being in emerging adulthood that makes one more likely to engage in risky, criminal, or just plain stupid behaviors? In this chapter, we will address these areas, laying a foundation for our understanding of what emerging adulthood is and how it shapes and alters behaviors.

First presented by Arnett in 1994, emerging adulthood is a theory that re-conceptualized the lives of people from their late teens through their mid to late twenties in industrialized nations like the United States (Arnett, 2015).

Arnett's theory acts as a framework for recognizing that the traditional pathway to adulthood has changed to the point where it is not just a transition, but a separate stage of the life course. Arnett (2007, 2015) stated that there are five distinct features of emerging adulthood: identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling 'in between,' and emerging adulthood as an age of possibility. In Chap. 3, we will explore each of these in depth, but for now, let's just keep in mind that each is a distinct facet of what makes emerging adulthood unique and distinct from the teenage years or the young adulthood of the past.

According to Arnett (2015) the demographic and social shifts that have occurred over the last sixty years have given rise to emerging adulthood. Some of these changes include receiving more education over a longer period, the postponement of marriage and parenthood, and an extended and often unstable transition to consistent work that created a place for a new stage between adolescence and young adulthood, which Arnett defined as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2015, p. 8).

Let's turn our attention to how emerging adulthood evolved as a distinct stage of the life course. Arnett stated that emerging adulthood is rooted in changes over the last sixty years that have resulted in culturally constructed shifts and changes in behaviors, attitudes, at an individual and societal level (Arnett, 1998, 2000, 2005, 2015). There are four key factors that impacted the development of emerging adulthood as a distinct stage of the life course: (1) the shift from a manufacturing to a service and information-based economy, along with the increased need for higher levels of education that comes with such a change; (2) more freedoms for women which allowed for major increases in education and workplace opportunities, allowing many women to postpone marriage and parenthood, and pursue careers; (3) greater sexual freedoms and tolerance of premarital sex, with youth in society having active sex lives before marriage; and (4) the evolution of the Youth Movement (Arnett, 2005, 2015; Tanner & Arnett, 2009).

Starting in the 1960s, we see economic shifts which altered the economic prospects of young adults living a middle-class lifestyle without additional education in college or some other form of training (Cote, 2000). This change is rooted in the shift from a manufacturing economy where industries such as the automobile industry provided a large number of well-paying jobs, to a service-based economy in fields like healthcare and education (Burtless, 1990). From the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century most young Americans worked in

farming or manufacturing (Mirel, 1991). However, as a result of the shift towards a more service-based economy young people were subjected to ‘education inflation,’ a need for increased credentials to attain employment (Cote & Allahar, 1995; Salvatore, 2013). To put it another way, as the economy changed so did the criteria for youth to get jobs that would pay enough for them to earn a living wage. Those of you old enough to remember the days (or heard about them through your parents or grandparents) when a high school education was enough to get you a position in a factory that allowed you to own a home, raise a family, and even go on the occasional vacation, probably have experienced the frustration of working harder to attain less than your parents or grandparents.

The next core areas of change are in workplace opportunities, education, marriage, and parenting for women. Over the past half-century participation in post-secondary education has increased, especially for females (see Fig. 2.1). According to a report by the Pew Research Center approximately 76 percent of women who recently completed high school continue to college, relative to 52 percent of men. This has been an ongoing trend in recent decades including removal of barriers in the workplace for women; thus the benefits of a college education have increased for females (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). During this time, we also see changes



Fig. 2.1 Number of 25-year-olds with college education by gender 1975–2015 (*Numbers in thousands. **Data adapted from <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/educational-attainment/time-series/cps-historical-time-series/ta-b-1.xlsx>)

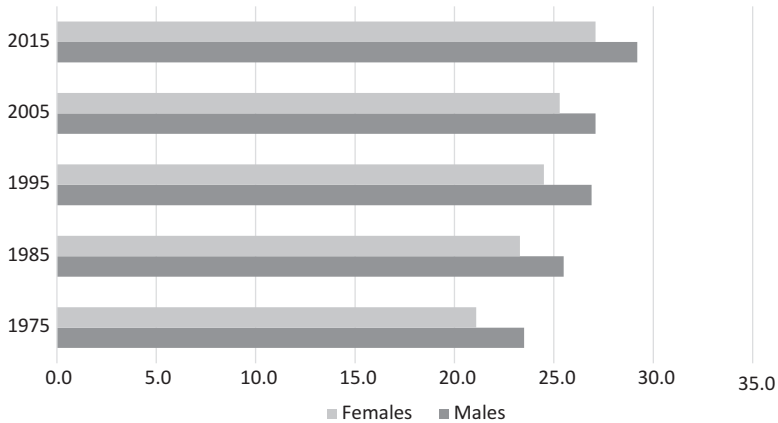


Fig. 2.2 Estimated median age at first marriage by gender 1975–2015. (Data adapted from: <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/families/time-series/marital/ms2.xls>)

in marital trends such as the postponement of marriage (see Fig. 2.2). For example, the median age of marriage in 1960 was 20.3 for women and 22.8 for men (Arnett, 2000). However, recent statistics from the US Census Bureau revealed that in 2015 women were marrying at about 27 and men about 29, a marked postponement from only a few generations ago (US Census, 2015). Coinciding with the postponement of marriage is the postponement of having children, a trend Wilkie (1981) observed started in the 1960s. By the beginning of the 1980s about a third of women didn't have their first child until after the age of 25. According to the Center for Disease Control, the average age of a woman having a child was about 26 in 2014. We have also seen an increase in the number of women having children late in life, with the proportion of the first child born to women between the ages of 30 and 34 increasing 28 percent and those in women over 35 increasing 23 percent between the years 2000 and 2014 (Leonard, 2016).

The third key area identified by Tanner and Arnett (2009) is that of increased sexual freedoms. These sexual freedoms may be expressed in a variety of ways in emerging adulthood including having more sexual partners, being more open about sexuality, and sexual experimentation. Perhaps the area of most note, and one that influences all the previously mentioned, are attitudes towards premarital sex. In a 2015 study, Twenge,

Sherman, and Wells examined changes in American adults' sexual behaviors and attitudes. They found that the percentage of Americans who viewed premarital sex as "not wrong at all" steadily increased from the 1970s (with 29 percent viewing premarital sex as "not wrong at all") to almost 60 percent of American adults viewing premarital sex as "not wrong at all" in 2012. These data support Tanner and Arnett's argument that increased tolerance of premarital sex provides young people opportunities to explore their sexuality before marriage. Another key area is the rise of 'hooking up,' a type of relationship in which there is a mutual attraction, sometimes a prior friendship, that allows the individuals to have sexual relations without commitment of expectations, though sometimes one partner may have a desire for a more formal relationship (Arnett, 2015; Regnerus & Uecker, 2011). 'Hook-ups' and the similar arrangement of 'friends with benefits' allow greater freedom to have more sexual experiences with more partners; however, as we shall see, there are dangers and costs associated with these arrangements. Finally, we have seen a marked change in attitudes towards homosexuality in recent years. While still stigmatized, gays and lesbians have increased rights and freedoms in the modern era, allowing emerging adulthood to be a time for gay and lesbian experimentation and expression (Arnett, 2015).

The final area discussed by Arnett (2015) is the evolution of the Youth Movement during the 1960s and 1970s. This movement demonized adulthood and celebrated action, being, and feeling young. Because of the Youth Movement, there was a shift in how young people viewed transitioning to adulthood, as well as roles symbolic of being an adult such as being a spouse or a parent. Prior generations of young people raised during the Great Depression or World War II were eager to settle into adult roles and the attainment of stability which marriage, employment, and children provided (Arnett, 2015). Conversely, the youth of the modern era view adulthood from a very different vantage point. Instead of seeing marriage, parenthood, and children as achievements, they are viewed as impediments to be dodged or avoided, at least until they are ready to take on those roles. Key to understanding this perspective is that emerging adults view adulthood and its corresponding security and obligations as an end to their freedom.

To summarize, emerging adulthood evolved as a distinct stage of life because of changes in the economy, the educational and employment opportunities for women, changing trends of marriage and parenthood, and the rise of the Youth Movement. We will explore the importance of each of these areas in the following chapters, but for now, we know what

changed in our society that altered the lives of young people, leading them to experience emerging adulthood.

THE EMERGING ADULTHOOD GAP

Now that we have established how emerging adulthood occurred and what it is, we need to turn our attention to why it influences so many to engage in risky, dangerous, criminal, and just plain stupid behaviors.

For us to understand emerging adults and why they are so likely to engage in these behaviors we should consider many turning points, and in particular the fact that social bonds that reduce offending and participation in risky and dangerous behaviors are absent or delayed during emerging adulthood. Unlike adolescence, where there are formal (e.g., teachers) and informal (e.g., parents) social controls to restrict or limit the above-mentioned behaviors, these largely are not present in emerging adulthood: college professors generally don't police students; if a student fails to show up for class there isn't a truancy officer to call or an email to a parent, they simply are marked absent, if the professor even records attendance at all. In emerging adults, we have a group of biologically mature youth, who in the past would have been married, having children, and working. However, today they are largely unencumbered and are instead focusing on completing higher education, experimenting with romantic relationships and their sexuality, and trying different types of work to see what suits them best.

So how does the lack of (informal) social controls lead so many in emerging adulthood to engage in risky, dangerous, and just plain stupid behaviors? My answer is the 'emerging adulthood gap' (Salvatore, 2017). First presented by Salvatore (2017) the 'emerging adulthood gap' thesis is rooted in the work of Moffitt (1993) who presented a developmental theory that described two key offending trajectories, the adolescent limited and life-course persistent offender. The adolescent limited or 'AL' trajectory consists of individuals who mainly engage in lower level crimes like being loud and rowdy, underage drinking, and shoplifting. These 'ALs' usually stop engaging in these types of behaviors by the end of high school. In the second group are individuals in the life-course persistent or 'LCP' trajectory who engage in antisocial behavior earlier in the life course, participate in lower level and more serious crimes such as robbery, as well as the lower level offenses typical of AL offenders; these 'LCP' offenders do not desist, but instead continue their involvement in offending through adulthood.

Essential to Moffitt's (1993) work is the idea of the maturity gap, defined as the delay between biological and social maturation during

which adolescents engage in offending due to the frustration experienced by being biologically, but not socially mature, and thereby unable to fully participate in adult society. According to Moffitt most offenders are on an adolescent limited trajectory, and cease to offend when the maturity gap closes once they reach social maturity and can participate in the economy. In other words, once youth reach social maturity and can fully participate in 'adult' society they generally stop engaging in the types of delinquency common during adolescence.

More recently, research has incorporated emerging adulthood into the discourse on antisocial behavior. Studies have explored the potential for criminal onset during emerging adulthood (e.g., Couture, 2009; Mata & Van Dulmen, 2012), changes in offending behavior during emerging adulthood (e.g., Haffeejee, Yoder, & Beder, 2013), the influence of turning points and social bonds on offending during emerging adulthood (e.g., Markowitz & Salvatore, 2012; Salvatore & Markowitz, 2014; Salvatore & Taniguchi, 2012; Salvatore, Taniguchi, & Welsh, 2012), as well as the influence of emerging adulthood on sexual behaviors and drug use (Arnett, 1998; Marcus, 2009; Piquero, Brame, Mazzerole, & Hapanen, 2002; White & Jackson, 2004). Although these studies have laid a solid foundation in the area of emerging adulthood and brought it into the social science discourse, they have yet to fully conceptualize and theoretically link emerging adulthood into the literature on offending.

To address this, we need to consider that like Moffitt's 'maturity gap' during adolescence, there is a similar 'gap' during emerging adulthood characterized by experimentation with substances, sexuality, and offending, reflecting the exploratory nature of emerging adulthood, as well as the lack of informal social controls on emerging adults. As such we define the emerging adulthood gap as follows: a period during emerging adulthood in which there is an increased sense of experimentation, freedom, choice, often marked by offending, substance use, sexual experimentation, and risky behaviors, in which there is a decreased level of informal social controls. Due to the social maturity 'gap' caused by being in emerging adulthood some may be prone to offending, substance abuse, sexual experimentation, and other risky and dangerous behaviors. What the 'emerging adulthood gap' model provides is a theoretical mechanism to explain offending during emerging adulthood (Fig. 2.3). As Fig. 2.3 demonstrates, as individuals reach emerging adulthood some of them reach turning points such as marriage and attaining full-time employment on time. These turning points allow social bonds to develop, thus inhibiting crime and deviance. On the other hand, individuals who fail to

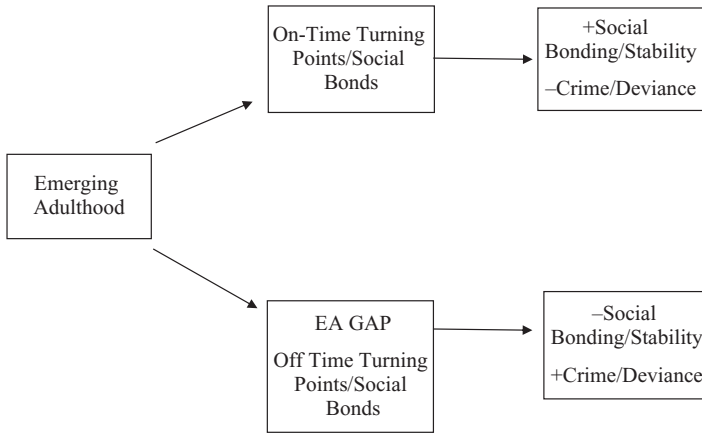


Fig. 2.3 Emerging adulthood gap conceptual model

reach turning points on time fail to develop these social bonds and will continue to engage in crime and deviance during emerging adulthood; in other words, they are ‘caught’ in the emerging adulthood gap.

Youth in emerging adulthood, even though they are biologically and socially mature, still haven’t fully transitioned to adult roles or as Arnett (2005, 2007) argued, they are in a state of being ‘in between.’ The ‘in between’ nature of emerging adulthood is defined here as the ‘emerging adulthood gap’ and those in it may be more likely to engage in offending, in a similar manner to those in Moffitt’s ‘maturity gap’ of adolescence. Those in the emerging adulthood gap may engage in binge drinking, speeding, experimenting with drugs and alcohol, engaging in unprotected sex, shoplifting, and being loud and rowdy, but they will stop short of the more serious, violent, and predatory crimes characteristic of Moffitt’s life-course persistent offenders. To put it another way, the emerging adulthood gap allows us to explain why we see so many risky and dangerous behaviors in young adults. Unlike the generations of youth who came of age in the 1950s, young people born post 1960 face different circumstances in the areas of education, marriage, and family, and as a result they do not marry or become parents until much later than prior generations. This lack of social bonds and turning points creates an emerging adulthood gap during which many may experiment with their sexuality, substance use, crime, and other risky behaviors. It is important to note not all young persons will get caught in the emerging adulthood gap; some may still meet traditional turning points like marriage at an early stage, or have established relation-

ships with coworkers, bosses, and so forth that can act as social bonds capable of restricting their behavior. As we continue through this book we will explore these behaviors and gain more understanding of them and the potential harms and risks they pose to emerging adults.

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Emerging Adulthood: A Time of Instability, Exploration, and Change

Abstract Emerging adulthood is marked by changes across multiple life domains. These distinguishing features have been identified by scholars as being key to understanding the exploratory nature of emerging adult including changing of jobs, different types of romantic and sexual relationships, experimentation with drugs, and alcohol, and engaging in risky and dangerous behaviors.

Keywords Instability • Change • Identity exploration • Self-focus • Optimism

One of the core facets of emerging adulthood is that it is a stage of the life course that is marked by instability and change across multiple life domains (Arnett, 2005; Cote, 2000; Salvatore, 2013). As discussed in Chaps. 1 and 2, the instability and exploratory nature of emerging adulthood can lead to a variety of behaviors such as substance use, sexual and romantic experimentation, as well as criminal offending. The instability and exploratory nature of emerging adulthood may be explained by the five distinguishing features of emerging adulthood that make it a distinct stage of the life course; it is not adolescence, nor is it young adulthood, instead it is a unique and relatively new period of life marked by key features. In this chapter, we will explore five distinguishing features of emerging adulthood in the United States that have been identified by Arnett.

In 2005, further refined in 2015, Arnett proposed five distinguishing features of emerging adulthood in the United States:

1. Identity exploration—this considers questions such as ‘who’ the individual is in relation to romantic relationships, sexual experiences, and work.
2. Instability—this reflects changes in romantic relationships, jobs, and where the individual lives.
3. Self-focus—being focused on one’s self, with obligations to and interest in others being low.
4. Feeling ‘in between’—this is the transitory nature of emerging adulthood, neither adolescence nor young adulthood.
5. Possibilities/optimism—emerging adults are highly optimistic and excited about the opportunities open to them.

Below we will explore each of these areas and how they relate to behavior during emerging adulthood.

IDENTITY EXPLORATION

While most of us associate identity exploration with adolescence, Arnett (2015, p. 9) stated that it is the most distinctive feature of emerging adulthood. The two domains where identity exploration is most prevalent are love and work (Erikson, 1968, p. 150). Most people begin their initial steps into romance, love, and sex during adolescence, but it is when emerging adulthood is reached that identity explorations in these areas come to fruition and emerging adults examine what kind of person they want to be involved with romantically and what kind of long-term relationship they are looking for, with the late teens and early twenties being an ideal time to engage in these explorations. Free of the restraints of parents and teachers, but still not committed to adult roles marked by full-time employment and parenthood, they can devote time to identity explorations in love and romance. In a similar manner, emerging adults are also free to explore issues of identity exploration related to work such as what kind of field they want to be in for the long term and what kind of work they want to do.

As mentioned above, adolescence has generally been associated with identity formation. Erickson (1950) examined identity versus role confusion as the main challenge of adolescence. However, in 1968 Erickson

argued that in industrialized societies (such as the United States) a ‘prolonged adolescence’ would provide young adults an opportunity for role experimentation during which they can find their place in society, very much reflecting Arnett’s (2005, 2015) view of these issues.

Today, Erickson’s ideas are more relevant than ever. As studies have found, identity formation is typically not reached by high school and often continues through emerging adulthood (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Luyckx, Meca, & Ritchie, 2015). This is reflected in romantic and sexual relationships during emerging adulthood with recent studies examining new configurations of relationships such as ‘hook-ups’ and ‘friends with benefits’ (Garcia & Rieber, 2008; Lambert, Kahn, & Apple, 2003; Paul & Hayes, 2002; Shulman & Connolly, 2013). ‘Hooking up’ generally references sexual interactions that are non-committed and which have no emotionally consequential components, like a casual sex encounter (Paul, Wenzel, & Harvey, 2008). They usually involve people who have never met before or who have been casual friends; the sexual behaviors range from kissing through sexual intercourse (Paul & Hayes, 2002). These types of relations allow emerging adults to explore questions such as “what kind of person do I want to be with?” in contrast to the more immediate question, “what kind of person will be enjoyable for now?” that is examined during adolescence. By exploring many different relationships during emerging adulthood via ‘hooking up’ or ‘friends with benefits,’ as well as regular dating relationships, emerging adults learn about the type of qualities they are looking for in a partner, as well as what they don’t want in a partner, in other words by having lots of relationships and sexual experiences emerging adults can find out what does, and perhaps more importantly, doesn’t work for them in terms of romantic partners and relationships (Arnett, 2015).

We also see that in work there is a similar juxtaposition of the transient examination of work in adolescence and the more serious probing of work and related identity explorations found in emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2015). Gillespie (2015) reported the number of teenagers that have jobs in the United States as approximately 4.7 million, demonstrating that the trend of employment during adolescence continues to the present, though there have been ups and downs in these trends depending on the economy. However, most of these jobs are relatively transitory and many adolescents only hold these jobs for a few months at a time (Mortimer, 2010). Though there are exceptions. For example, I held my ‘teenage’ job through high school and college, into my first semester of graduate school, well into my twenties, though I never considered it a ‘career’; instead, I viewed it as a

means of funding my education. Most teenagers work in low-skilled service jobs in restaurants and retail (Arnett, 2015; Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986); few consider these jobs as a career, instead they are a means of funding their recreational activities, saving for school, and meeting other goals.

In emerging adulthood, we see a shift in how work is viewed. Emerging adults transition from viewing work as transitory and a means to an end, as they did in adolescence, to an exploration of the type of work they may do during adulthood. The process of exploring work as well as the related process of education (more on that as we go), provides another opportunity for identity exploration. According to Arnett (2015, p. 10), emerging adults will consider questions like, “What type of work can I do well? What kind of work do I want to do long term?” As emerging adults explore different college majors and work different jobs they gain insight into themselves, learning about what they like and dislike, are interested in, and where their aptitudes lie. Equally, if not more important, emerging adults also learn what they don’t like and aren’t good at during this time. Many may experience failures in college and work, but these are of value because they help provide insight into their skills, strengths, and weaknesses (Arnett, 2015).

While emerging adults are more focused about their choices in the areas of work and love, it is significant that this doesn’t occur instantly, but rather evolves over time. Ravert (2009) found that many explorations that occur during emerging adulthood are viewed as fun, and some of the behaviors motivated by sensation seeking (e.g., experimentation with drugs and alcohol, many sexual partners/experiences) are those that emerging adults want to experience before they ‘settle down’ into adult life. This type of thinking has become so popular that it has earned its own acronym YOLO, “You Only Live Once” (Ravert, 2009). This ‘now or never’ philosophy is reflected in a variety of areas identified by Ravert (2009) including travel/adventure, social events, substance use, relationships, carefree lifestyle, sports/action, academic/career experience, and independence/personal expression. For those seeking to explore these areas, emerging adulthood provides an ideal opportunity to do so, while accomplishing the goal of identity exploration.

INSTABILITY

The abovementioned areas of identity exploration lead to frequent changes for emerging adults; reflecting this, Arnett (2005, p. 241) stated that emerging adulthood is one of the most unstable periods of the life course.

Emerging adults see changes across many domains in their life ranging from romantic partners and jobs, to where they are living. In 1994, Goldscheider and Goldscheider found during the period from the 1920s through the 1980s the rate of young adults moving back home increased from 22 percent to about 40 percent because of the challenges young adults faced with keeping an independent residence, a challenge that continues to the present (Arnett, 2000, 2015; Cote, 2000, Salvatore, 2013). Okimoto and Stegall (1987) explored the phenomenon of children moving out of the parental home to pursue an independent life, yet being unable to support themselves, and ultimately returning to the parental home while they complete their education or establish themselves in careers. Identifying these young people as the “Boomerang Kids,” Okimoto and Stegall’s work helped popularize the idea that young people may not have it as easy as their parents and grandparents, and may need to rely on parents for support longer than prior generations (see Fig. 3.1).

Arnett (2015) argued that the instability of emerging adulthood is best reflected in how often emerging adults change residences. Using data from the US Census, we find that rates of moving reach a peak at age 18 then drop, again peaking in the mid-twenties, followed by another drop. The first move is reflective of youth moving out of their parents’ home to

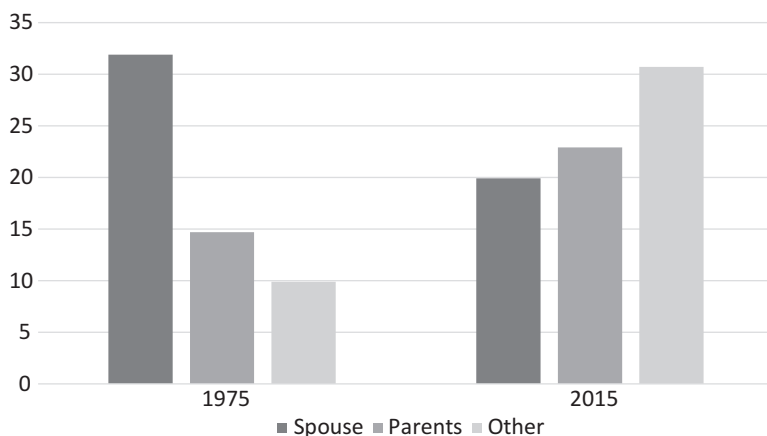


Fig. 3.1 Young adults living with spouses vs. parents 1975 compared to 2016 (in millions). (Adapted from US Census Bureau, 1975 and 2016 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement)

go to college or just to live on their own (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1994). This initial wave of moving is followed by others as some drop out of college, some return and others don't; they may 'boomerang' back to the parental home as discussed by Okimoto and Stegall (1987). Others may live with roommates during emerging adulthood; some of these arrangements last, whereas others are temporary due to incompatibility between the roommates. Still others may live with a romantic partner during emerging adulthood. For some these romantic partnerships lead to a longer-term cohabitation or marriage; when or if these fail, they move another time (see Fig. 3.1). For many, once they finish college they move once more, to either start their careers or seek further education (Arnett, 2015). About 40 percent of these emerging adults will end up moving back with their parents at least once (Arnett, 2015; Arnett & Schwab, 2013; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1994).

The residential changes indicative of emerging adulthood make it an unstable time. However, these changes also provide an opportunity for identity exploration, allowing emerging adults to see what type of living arrangements will work best for them, and perhaps more importantly, which ones won't (Arnett, 2015).

SELF-FOCUS

Arnett (2005, 2015) stated that emerging adulthood is the most self-focused time of life. Based on our discussion of emerging adulthood so far this isn't very surprising: to complete college, establish oneself in a career (or even get a job), find an apartment or purchase a home, and just deal with day-to-day life, we would expect this time of life would require self-focus. To be fair, emerging adulthood is far from the only stage of life where people are self-focused; children and adolescents are certainly self-focused (as are many people in just about every stage of the life course), while they usually have at least one parent, as well as teachers who make some level of demands and set some parameters on them. These may range from domestic chores such as making their bed, to completing in-class and homework assignments. Past emerging adulthood, spouses and romantic partners, coworkers, bosses, and work groups set standards and behavioral expectations with corresponding sanctions that call on us to be less self-focused and to be concerned about others be it the work group/coworkers, our family, or organizations and communities (Arnett, 2005, 2015).

In contrast, emerging adults are relatively free from day-to-day attachments and obligations to others. This provides them the opportunity to be more self-focused during this stage of the life course. This self-focus can have pro-social functions, for example, going to college can be incredibly demanding on time, as well as an individual's energy and focus, especially for emerging adults who are working while in college. There are simply only so many hours in a day and to accomplish their set goals (finishing schoolwork, working, etc.) they have to be focused on themselves. In a similar manner, those in the initial stage of their career, especially those who have long commutes, may work part-time jobs in addition to their main job, and thus need to be self-focused to simply accomplish goals and day-to-day tasks.

As discussed above, being self-focused means that social bonds and networks that act as social controls in other stages of the life course may have less influence during emerging adulthood. Of course, emerging adults still have relationships with parents, but they are less likely to interact with them on a day-to-day basis once they have moved out of their parents' home (Arnett, 2004). Even those emerging adults that still live with their parents may find they are spending less time with them, and parents have less influence than they did in high school. Most emerging adults have jobs and romantic partners, but during emerging adulthood these change frequently. As such, they may not have a lasting influence or act as effective social controls; furthermore, many in emerging adulthood may not work or have romantic partners for extended periods (Arnett, 2006). Interestingly, Larson (1990) found that emerging adults may spend more of their free, leisure time by themselves, reflecting the self-focused nature of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2005).

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argued that for social controls to be effective, there must be a group such as family, peers, employers/coworkers whose views the individual values and doesn't want to endanger by participating in criminal or deviant behaviors. During emerging adulthood, these social bonds and networks are weakest, and the individual is more likely to participate in the risky, dangerous, criminal, deviant (or just plain stupid) behaviors we are examining in the book. For example, Kypri, McCarthy, Coe, and Brown (2004) examined the relationship between social control and substance use during emerging adulthood. Kypri et al. (2004) revealed that substance use increased during the year after high school during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood, as many in emerging adulthood left their parents' home, thereby decreasing

the effectiveness of parents as a social control. In the following year, when many emerging adults were moving out of their college dorms, social controls decreased even more, since they were no longer subject to the supervision of college dorm officials (e.g., resident assistants). As a result, emerging adults had an increased level of self-focus and a corresponding decrease in social control, leading to an increase in substance use.

Arnett (2005) stated that one key part of emerging adults' social networks that doesn't weaken during emerging adulthood is friendships. In fact, friends may become more important during emerging adulthood. However, Arnett (2005) raised concerns about the ability of friendship networks to be effective social controls, since emerging adults prone to engage in risky/dangerous behaviors may self-select friends that support rather than restrict these behaviors. Studies have found that such friendships have been related to risky and problematic behaviors (Husson, Kicks, Levy, & Curran, 2001; Pittman & Richard, 2008).

To help better understand the role of friendship networks during emerging adulthood McNamara-Barry, Madsen, Nelson, Carroll, and Badger (2009) examined how friendship and romantic relationships influenced identity development and achievement of adulthood criteria. Interestingly, McNamara-Barry et al. (2009) found romantic relationships' qualities influence adulthood criteria, but friendship had the opposite effect. This may suggest that romantic relationships have a greater influence during emerging adulthood, compared to friendships. This could reflect the greater level of intimacy experienced in a romantic relationship, thereby fostering a stronger bond, relative to a non-romantic friendship.

FEELING IN BETWEEN

Many in emerging adulthood feel like they are trapped on a boat, drifting between the shores of adolescence and adulthood. Arnett (2015) stated that the exploration and instability discussed above leave many in emerging adulthood feeling like it is a period of being 'in between,' neither adolescents restricted by parents and teachers, but not quite fully independent adults capable of making their own decisions and paying their own bills.

So why do emerging adults feel like they are bouncing between being a carefree teenager and a responsible adult? Probably because they haven't hit the criteria for being a 'real' adult if there is such a thing! According to

Arnett (2015, p. 15) there are three key criteria that need to be met for adulthood to be reached. These criteria are: (1) being responsible for yourself, (2) making independent decisions, and (3) reaching a place where you are financially independent (this means your parents aren't giving you a generous monthly allowance that covers the bulk of your expenses).

For most emerging adults reaching these criteria is a process. Even though many feel they start to feel like an adult in their late teens, they may not fully self-identify as an adult until their mid or late twenties (Arnett, 2015). Most will rely on parents for some level of financial support, even if it's for little things like mom and dad stopping by with some groceries or household supplies. Even though my own emerging adulthood is now in the rear-view mirror, I still get occasional 'gifts' from my parents—usually coffee, toilet paper, and household cleaners, a not so subtle way of them saying that even though you are an adult you will probably always need some level of help (even if it's relatively minor and occasional). As a recovering emerging adult, I can speak to my experience that throughout college and two rounds of graduate school, I often felt adrift and not like a 'real' adult. It wasn't until I purchased my own home that the reality of living an adult life sunk in, and there are days when I still feel adrift, and that I will never really hit the markers of adulthood in the same manner as my parents and grandparents. Interestingly, studies have found these criteria are reflective of reaching adulthood not only in the United States but across many other countries and cultures (Arnett, 2003; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Horowitz & Bromnick, 2007).

POSSIBILITIES/OPTIMISM

One of the main characteristics of emerging adults is their keen sense of optimism and open possibilities. Speaking as a former emerging adult, I can see (for better or worse) from my own experience that optimism is a key tool against the uncertain nature of the future. Even post-emerging adulthood I still see things as half full rather than half empty, viewing even the dourest situations as having a silver lining or the potential to work out in the best way possible. Perhaps this is a legacy of having gone through emerging adulthood, and it's not necessarily a bad thing, though seeing the world with rose-colored glasses might make you miss some flaws and be blind to the unpleasant realities of life.

So where does this sense of optimism and possibility originate? According to Arnett (2005, 2015) it may be rooted in the fact that few of the dreams of emerging adults have been tested (and dashed), therefore there is still hope of a future with a well-paying, satisfying job, fulfilling relationships, and children who are A students, do all their chores, and are always respectful. The reality of financial struggles, the drudgery of any day-to-day job, relationships that become as flat as stale soda, and children who don't hit the honor roll or even speak to them at points, are years ahead, and few want to view their futures as dour or unhappy.

Another factor that makes emerging adulthood the 'age of possibility' is that emerging adults have the possibility of making radical transformations in their lives. Since most emerging adults move away from home (though as we discussed many return), and haven't solidified relationships or friendship networks, they are free to make radical changes in residence, employment, and education (Arnett, 2015). This is a key factor in emerging adulthood; even for those from impoverished or unhappy homes and families, or who have grown up in the most difficult of situations, they have the possibility and chance of transforming their lives (Arnett, 2015, p. 16).

Arnett (2015) stated that even emerging adults who come from the most well-adjusted and happy families see emerging adulthood as an opportunity for change, where they can make decisions free of their parents' influence, to become the people they want to be and live the type of life they want. Emerging adults have an opportunity to reinvent themselves, to move anywhere they want, to pursue their dream job (even if the reality doesn't live up to the fantasy). However, regardless of their family history, during the stage of emerging adulthood, a window of time ranging from about seven to ten years, their ability to pursue their dreams, and the choices they have open to them are greater than they were before emerging adulthood or than they will be at every post-emerging adulthood stage. With all that hope and the options open to them, it's no wonder emerging adults have so much optimism!

In sum, emerging adulthood is a time of exploration and change across multiple life domains. These changes range from living situations and romantic relationships to education and employment. Emerging adulthood is also marked by an optimistic outlook and hope for the future. As we will see in the following chapters, the experimental nature of emerging adulthood may also have negative consequences for emerging adults.

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Emerging Adults and Changing Values: Religion and Morality During Emerging Adulthood

Abstract Morality and religion are core factors that influence the behaviors of emerging adults. Studies have found despite decreased levels of religious engagement in emerging adulthood, religion continues to be an important factor that influences behavior during emerging adulthood. The roles of religion and morality as components of emerging adults' developing worldview are explored, and the role of religion and morality in influencing risky and dangerous behaviors is presented.

Keywords Religion • Morality • Religious affiliation • Religious participation • Beliefs

Let's take a breath and recap. So far, we have defined what emerging adulthood is, we have explored what caused this unique stage of the life course to occur, we looked at the emerging adulthood gap, and we discussed the key characteristics of emerging adulthood—that's a lot to look at! These areas have laid a foundation and helped us gain an understanding of the unique nature of emerging adulthood and how being in emerging adulthood shapes the behavior of those in this stage of the life course. One factor we haven't explored yet is perhaps one of the most interesting: the role of religion and morality. Prior studies like Arnett (1998) have found that emerging adults are less likely to attend religious services. Despite the decreased level of participation in religious services studies

such as Arnett and Jensen (2002) have found that religion is still important to emerging adults in college, and others like Salvatore (2013) have found that emerging adults with higher levels of religious participation have lower rates of offending and substance use. Other studies such as Smith, Christofferson, Davidson, and Snell-Herzog (2011) have looked at the concepts of moral relativism and attitudes towards religion and morality of emerging adults, finding that these are related to many negative outcomes associated with emerging adulthood such as high rates of sexually transmitted infections. In this chapter, we will take a look at these studies and others and get a better understanding of how emerging adults view morality and religion, and how these influence the behaviors of emerging adults.

You may be asking, why look at the role of religion and morality? Well, religion is an important social control which can act to inhibit deviance, crime, and other stupid and risky behaviors (Laub & Sampson, 2001; Salvatore, 2013). This view is supported by studies of emerging adults like that of Salvatore and Taniguchi (2012) which found that the more often emerging adults attend religious services, the less likely they are to commit crime. Religion can help guide and shape our worldview and provide values that direct our behavior. Developing religious beliefs may be a key part of our identity (Arnett, 2015, p. 211). Another core part of our identity is our values and morality which help guide our choices and decisions. Religious beliefs and morality are overlapping as most religions contain prescriptions like the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism or the Ten Commandments which serve as moral guidelines for a variety of Judeo-Christian faiths. Morality can also be divorced from religion, drawing on schools of secular thought. Further, Killen and Wainryb (2000) explain that morality might be reflected at both an individual and collective level. From an individualistic perspective, moral decisions can be guided based on personal freedom, growth, and development. From a collective viewpoint, moral decisions can be based on the needs and interests of the group, or society as a whole. In general, societies tend to be more geared towards either an individual or collective focus, but we also form a moral orientation that blends each to guide how we make moral decisions on a day-to-day basis.

As we have examined, emerging adulthood is a critical period of life for all components of identity development, including the development of a worldview. While these processes begin in childhood, it is during emerging adulthood that we can critically assess complex issues and questions such as who or what do we perceive as God, what is right and wrong, and

what may happen to us after death (Arnett, 2015, p. 212). As we move through emerging adulthood to about age 25 when scholars such as Steinberg (2008) have stated brain development is complete, we may find our worldview and corresponding views of complex issues and questions such as those mentioned above, may solidify. As such, emerging adulthood is a key period for personal and moral development, during which religion and morality play a central part.

EMERGING ADULTS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood is filled with changes. One of these may be views on religious beliefs. As stated above, Arnett and Jensen (2002) found that even while participation in religion tends to be low for college-aged students, most feel that religion is still important to them. Further, Salvatore and Taniguchi (2012) found that the more an individual participates in religious services, the less likely they were to offend during emerging adulthood. Religion still seems to ‘matter’ to emerging adults, but how does this translate to what they believe?

One of the most comprehensive sources regarding the religious beliefs of emerging adults is the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) run out of the University of Notre Dame and directed by Christian Smith and his team. Starting in 2003, Smith and his associates used a national sample of individuals between the ages of 13 and 17 and continued to examine them through emerging adulthood. This study is of great value because it is one of the first to take an in-depth look at the religious practice and beliefs of a recent cohort that is experiencing emerging adulthood. A 2008 report on the NSYR by Denton, Pearce, and Smith examined several dimensions of religiosity including religious affiliation, religious beliefs, public religious practice, evaluation of religious concentrations, private religious practice, personal religiosity and spirituality, and self-reports of personal religious change, across two waves of data. Wave 1 examined the sample during adolescence (from ages 13–17) and as they transitioned to emerging adulthood in wave 2 (16 to 21 years of age). Here we will look at some of the key findings that are most relevant to our discussion of emerging adulthood and we will then turn our attention to how emerging adults view morality.

To begin let’s look at Denton, Pearce, and Smith’s (2008) findings regarding religious affiliation. The NSYR asked respondents if they belonged to the following religions: Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Protestant,

another religious, or no religion. Interestingly, there wasn't a radical change between each wave. The largest change was a decline in those who reported a Protestant affiliation with about a quarter of those who said they were Protestants at wave 1 reporting a different affiliation at wave 2. Approximately, 15 percent of those who said they were Protestants at wave 1 reported no religious affiliation at wave 2 (Denton et al., 2008, p. 5). Looking at other religious affiliation the bulk of the respondents reported having the same associations between wave 1 and wave 2 (Denton et al., 2008, p. 6). These findings suggest that overall, religious affiliation remains stable as youth transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood. However, it is important to note that while religious affiliation may remain relatively stable, it doesn't necessarily equate to belief or practice. For example, Arnett (2015) interviewed several subjects who identified with a religion, but stated they didn't believe in the religion, doubted its belief system, or simply didn't participate in religious services. These findings may suggest religious identification may remain consistent, but it doesn't mean that identification influences what an individual believes or practices in day-to-day life.

Turning our attention to religious beliefs, the NSYR examined specific religious beliefs, which gives us a valuable insight into the role of religious change in the lives of youth in the United States. Comparing the results of wave 1 and wave 2, Denton et al. (2008) found relatively minor changes in religious beliefs. The first question examined at each wave was, "Do you believe, in God, or not, or are you unsure?" At wave 1 the NSYR found 84 percent believed in God; this dropped to 78 percent at wave 2. Regarding the percentage of those who didn't believe in God there was a small uptick, from 3 percent to 5 percent from wave 1 to wave 2. Finally, at wave 1, 13 percent reported they didn't know or were unsure if they believed in God; this increased to 18 percent at wave 2 (Denton et al., 2008, p. 7). The next question dealing with religious belief asked participants how they viewed God, as a personal being who impacted their lives, as a creator of the world who is no longer actively engaged in it, or as more of a cosmic force. Interestingly, the number of those who viewed God on a personal level decreased from 67 percent at wave 1, to 63 percent at wave 2. While this is a relatively minor decrease, it may reflect the uncertain nature of emerging adulthood. Looking at the number of those who viewed God as an uninvolved creator or cosmic force there were slight changes, with those who viewed God as uninvolved decreasing 1 percent and the number of those who viewed God as a cosmic life force increasing

2 percent respectively from wave 1 to wave 2 (Denton et al., 2008, p. 8). These changes are relatively small and reflect the finding that despite the minor changes most of these youth still maintain a belief in a personal God who is involved in their lives (Denton et al., 2008, p. 8). This finding may suggest that God as a concept matters to these youth on a personal level as they transition into emerging adulthood. On the other hand, studies also point to a consistent decline in religious beliefs overall. For example, a 2012 Pew Foundation survey found a marked increase in people who identify as “nones” or no religious affiliation, with the 18- to 29-year-old age group having a high rate of those who do not have religious affiliation (Hackett & Grim, 2012). Exactly how religious beliefs influence emerging adults may be an issue that scholars should continually examine over time using longitudinal studies to gain a better understanding of how exactly religious beliefs operate for those who have experienced emerging adulthood. As a relatively ‘new’ stage of the life course, there isn’t retrospective data that would allow us to see how emerging adulthood impacted religious beliefs over the entire life course.

Another series of questions posed to the NSYR sample included belief in angels, demons, reincarnation, astrology, and the afterlife, belief in judgment day, and questions such as whether it is okay to pick and choose beliefs, whether there only one religion, and whether it is okay to convert others. Of these questions, one is of note: “Is it okay to pick and choose beliefs?” Results of the NSYR found that from wave 1 to wave 2, there was a slight increase in the number of respondents who felt it was okay to pick and choose religious beliefs (Denton et al., 2008, p. 12). While a slight shift, it may reflect the experimental nature of emerging adulthood and the changing perceptions of these youth as they move closer towards adulthood. This finding may also be reflected in increased belief in astrology, demons, and reincarnation (Denton et al., 2008, p. 13). As discussed in previous chapters, one of Arnett’s core tenets of emerging adulthood is identity exploration, and this may include exploration of alternative beliefs and practices. As emerging adults may be prone to experiment with sexuality and substance use, religious beliefs may also be an arena where they study alternative views as they process through their identity exploration. Anecdotally, from my own experience and those of my close friends during emerging adulthood, I found many of us questioning the religious faiths in which we were raised. I have explored Buddhism, Wicca, and many other religious, both academically as a religious studies minor, and personally through the reading of books, watching documentaries, and so forth.

The bulk of my friends have reverted to the faiths of their childhoods (mainly Christian or Jewish denominations), but others have continued with the belief system they developed during emerging adulthood.

The next area of the NSYR dealt with public religious practice, including religious service attendance, attendance at religious education classes, and youth group involvement. As Salvatore (2013, p. 91) discussed, religion is a key social control and a higher level of attendance of religious services has been found to impact decreased levels of offending and substance use during emerging adulthood. What did the NSYR find about youth religious practices? Let's first look at religious service attendance. Comparing the results between waves 1 and 2, the findings revealed there was a general decrease in attendance of religious practices. At wave 2 there was a 13 percent decrease in the percentage of youth who attended religious services once a week or more relative to wave 1 (Denton et al., 2008, p. 14). These findings may illustrate changes in youth lives as they move into emerging adulthood. As adolescents, youth are subject to parents as a social control. As such, parents may mandate or 'make' youth go to church, synagogue, temple, etc. as a family activity or part of a routine. However, as youth move out of the home, go away to college, or simply become more independent of parents, they may be less apt to conform to their parent's practices and routines. Arnett (2015) stated that the increased individualism of emerging adulthood might also make them leery of organized religions. Other factors Arnett discussed are the lifestyles of many emerging adults; many are occupied with work and school during the week, and tend to spend time with friends on the weekends. As a result, they may be too tired to attend services as they once did (Arnett, 2015, p. 218).

Another critical issue for us to explore is the concept of morality and how emerging adults view it. In their 2011 book, Christian Smith and his colleagues found that for emerging adults notions of morality are rooted in personal choice, grounded in the idea that others should judge for themselves about moral issues, and everyone should have their own perspective. In other words, morality is a highly individualist concept for emerging adults. In their study, Smith et al. (2011, p. 21) found that 60 percent of the emerging adults they interviewed expressed a highly individualistic morality. Those in emerging adulthood strongly believe in tolerance and that people should be free to do what they want if it doesn't hurt others. Why do emerging adults ground their moral views in individualism? According to Smith et al. (2011, p. 22) it may be due to the challenge of

trying to deal with complex moral issues. For most, the idea of understanding morality on an individual level is hard enough; to apply a system to the whole of society may seem impossible. For example, the typical emerging adult may struggle (I think most do at some point or another) with issues such as premarital sex, sex with others while in a committed relationship, lying, and so forth. For some these behaviors may be viewed as acceptable as long as they don't cause direct harm to others. We may also see that what is right for us, may not be right for others so it's just not possible to reach a wider consensus on what is right and wrong. According to Smith et al. (2011, p. 22) moral individualism may ease the concept of morality for emerging adults, with moral individualism freeing them from the hassle of having to achieve social agreement on morality.

Moral individualism may also be related to the concept of moral relativity, but not always. Smith et al. (2011) stated that moral individualism might be grounded in the idea of moral relativity. Emerging adults acknowledge that what is right and wrong varies by time and culture, and feel morality is just a temporary construct. However, at the same time, they believe in almost universal moral truths that are relevant across the board, such as the belief it is wrong to harm other people, and that we should follow the rules, laws, and regulations of society. Further, despite their moral individualism, emerging adults have higher rates of participation in service organizations like Americorps and the Peace Corps (Arnett, 2015, p. 237).

Emerging adults also tend to be collectivistic in their thinking. These collectivistic values are reflected in what they want to do with their families, such as contributing to the well-being of parents, children, spouses, and grandchildren. Arnett (2015) found many emerging adults who wanted to help mentor the next generation by sharing their experiences and wisdom. Some also expressed the desire to help others by providing emotional support to those in need, as well as assisting people with day-to-day challenges such as changing a flat tire (Arnett, 2015, p. 240). Others expressed their collectivism through generosity and care for others. As Arnett's work suggests, emerging adults, despite their individualistic morality, do seem to care about the greater society and their communities.

For Smith and his colleagues, moral individualism and moral relativism may be endemic of greater concerns. They argued that the moral individualism found in emerging adults may reflect that this group is 'morally adrift' due to the lack of adequate moral education as part of the socialization process (Smith et al., 2011, pp. 60–61). According to Smith et al.

(2011, p. 61), the family, primary and secondary school, higher education, religious groups, sports teams, and so forth are not providing the foundation that emerging adults need to realize that moral individualism and moral relativity simply don't work. On the other hand, as Arnett (2015) argued, emerging adults have high rates of participation in service organization and collective concerns, suggesting they may not be entirely a lost cause when it comes to morality. As we move forward in this area of inquiry we need to see more studies looking at morality and how it is informed, shaped, and altered by experiencing emerging adulthood.

In sum, religion plays an important, yet still not fully understood role in the lives of emerging adults. Morality and moral development is often a process, and our understanding of the long-term influence of emerging adulthood on these may not be achieved until we can conduct retrospective studies of those who lived through emerging adulthood at later stages of the life course.

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How Marriage/Romance, Parenting, Education, and Work Are Different for Emerging Adults

Abstract Changes in marriage, parenthood, education, and employment have had a marked influence on the development on emerging adulthood as a distinct stage of the life course. Each of these factors are examined from a historical perspective, as well as how changes have altered the nature of young adulthood. A discussion of how each works for emerging adults is presented.

Keywords Education • Emerging adulthood • Employment • Marriage • Parenthood • Adulthood • Young adulthood

This chapter provides an in-depth look at how changes in four key areas—marriage, parenthood, education, and employment—led to emerging adulthood and decreased the social controls which traditionally would have inhibited offending and risky/dangerous behaviors in young adults. As we have explored in preceding chapters, several factors have been identified as being key to the evolution of emerging adulthood as a distinct stage of the life course. One of the most cited ones is marriage (Arnett, 1998, 2000, 2005; Cote, 2000; Salvatore, 2013).

Historically marriage has acted as symbolic entrance into adulthood. Anthropologists have found that across cultures, marriage works not only as the bonding of two people but also as a marker of entry into adulthood (Schlegel & Barry, 1991). Once a young man is married he is part of the

adult male social group, and he is no longer considered a boy. Similarly, once married a young woman rises to the level of other adult females (Arnett, 2015, p. 312). Scholars have found that historically, marriage operated the same way in the United States as it did in other cultures, until the latter part of the twentieth century (around the time emerging adulthood was first identified) (Kett, 1977; Model, 1989). In other words, marriage has almost always universally marked the entrance of adulthood across cultures.

Starting in the 1960s, we saw people postponing marriage more and more, with men and women delaying marriage past the traditional end of high school through the early twenties age range (Epenshade, 1985; Salvatore, 2013). For example, by 1987, almost 61 percent of females between the ages of 20 and 24 never married. This compares with about 36 percent who were never married only fifteen years earlier in the same age group. This trend was evident with males as well, with almost 78 percent of males in the 20–24 age group never married in 1987, relative to about 57 percent in 1972 (Salvatore, 2013, p. 11; US Census, 1972, 1987). More recently a Pew Foundation study found that adults are still marrying later in life with women marrying at age 27 and males age 29 respectively, a marked increase from age 20 for women and age 23 for men in 1960 (Wang & Parker, 2014, pp. 4–5).

Marriage, once one of the main indicators of reaching adulthood, no longer holds this status in the United States and other high-income nations (Arnett, 2015, p. 312). Why did the status of marriage change over a relatively short period? Scholars point to a variety of factors including the sexual revolution, the women's rights movement, and economic and social shifts (Arnett, 2015; Cote, 2000). Perhaps the best starting point is to think about what marriage meant at the beginning of the twentieth century. When that generation got married, it most likely represented their first sexual experiences, the first time they lived without their parents, and most likely the prospect of children and the responsibilities of parenthood, relatively quickly (how many children did your great-grandparents or great-great-grandparents have? Mine had 13!). For those who get married today, some may experience similar circumstances, but as the above information highlights, most are getting married later, they have lived outside their parental home in dorms and apartments, had a variety of sexual experiences, and most likely (we will be examining this soon) postpone parenthood. We have also seen other factors that may help explain the change of marriage as one of the top indicators of adulthood, such as the increase of

those raising children outside of marriage and cohabitation (Wang & Parker, 2014, p. 4).

Why is the postponement of marriage so vital for emerging adulthood? Cote (2000) argued that marriage is one of the key transitions to adult status and as previous studies in life course criminology have found, marriage is a core factor in predicting decreases in (emerging) adult offending (Salvatore, 2013; Salvatore & Markowitz, 2014; Salvatore & Taniguchi, 2012). How marriage ‘works’ is that as a socializing institution it is not only a romantic, but also an economic relationship. Marital partners will typically not tolerate behaviors that undermine the financial integrity of the relationship. Further, marriage alters social networks, with spouses socializing more with other married couples and family, over delinquent peers (Arnett, 1998; Laub & Sampson, 2003). With delays in marriage, those in emerging adulthood have yet one fewer social control to restrict them from engaging in risky and dangerous behaviors such as substance abuse, sexual experimentation that may involve unsafe sex, and criminal offending.

Along with marriage, parenthood traditionally acted as a primary indicator of adulthood in many societies. However, in recent years, for emerging adults across cultures, parenthood is consistently found to be at the bottom of the list of criteria marking adulthood (Arnett, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2015). This is of note because like marriage, parenthood acts as a socializing institution that encourages less self-focus and avoiding behaviors that could endanger the ability of the parent to support their child, or the child itself (Arnett, 2001; Laub & Sampson, 2003). Studies looking at samples that have not experienced emerging adulthood have found that parenthood was an essential marker of entrance into adulthood and greatly influenced taking on a much more responsible lifestyle. For example, Laub and Sampson’s (2003) study found many of the males they followed up at age 70 from Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck’s Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency Study, felt that being a parent influenced them to take on adult responsibilities and helped reduce offending behaviors because parenthood took up time and left them less time to hang out with antisocial peers. Other studies have found that along with marriage, parenthood acts as a form of role transition, leading to a decrease in deviant, risky, and criminal behaviors (Salvatore, 2013). Numerous studies have also found that those who don’t have children have a greater likelihood of engaging in criminal and delinquent behaviors (Arnett, 1998; Chassin, Pitts, & Prost, 2002; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Tucker, Ellickson, Orlando, Martino, & Klein, 2005; White et al., 2006).

In recent years, we have seen an increasing trend in the average age of becoming a parent (see Fig. 5.1). The National Survey of Family Growth reports national estimates of family growth including rates of fertility. The survey found a slight increase from a mean age of 22.9 in 2002 to 23 in 2010 for females and a stable 25.1 years of age for males in becoming a parent for the first time from 2002 through 2010. Looking at broader trends in age at first birth for men and women between 1986 and 2010 from data from the National Center for Family & Marriage Research it was found that for males the average age of becoming a father increased from a 25.3 in 1987 to 27.3 in 2010, and from 22.7 in 1987 for females, to an average of 24 in 2010 (Stykes, 2011). Identifying a similar trend with more recent data Mathews and Hamilton (2016) found that from 2000 to 2014 there was a marked increase of 1.4 years in the mean age of becoming a mother for the first time. In 2000, the average age of being a first-time mother was 24.9; by 2014 it had increased to 26.3 (Mathews & Hamilton, 2016, p. 1).

Why have people started to delay parenthood? Scholars like Cote (2000) point to the social changes that have brought about emerging

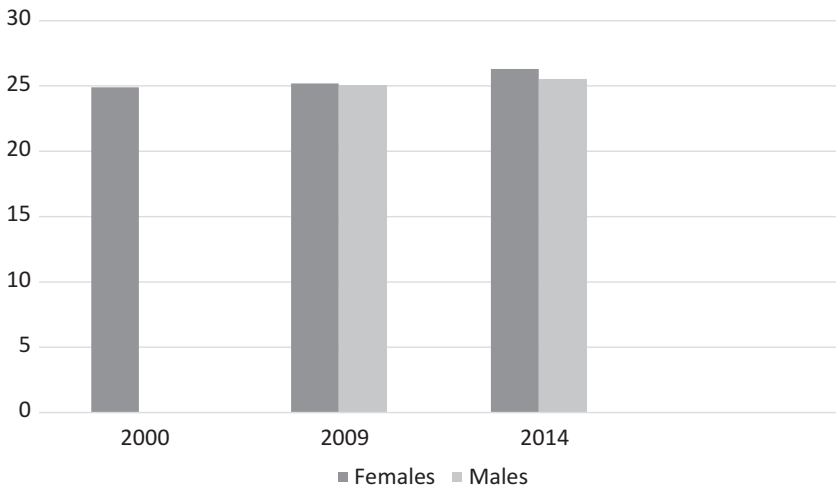


Fig. 5.1 Average age of first-time mother* and father** 2000–2014*. (*Adapted from Mean age of mothers is on the rise: United States, 2000–2014, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db232.htm>; **<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr051.pdf>)

adulthood as a distinct stage of the life course (e.g., economic shifts, the commodification of education) and influencing delays in parenthood. More recently, an article by Linn (2013) that spoke with Americans in their twenties about putting off parenthood identified several factors. Several young adults told Linn (2013) that they delayed parenting or don't plan on becoming a parent due to the debt they incurred to complete their education. The challenges related to increased and out of control debt were set out by Kamenetz (2006) in her book *Generation Debt* which details the financial struggles faced by young people due to student loans, credit card debt, low, flat wages, and lack of growth opportunity. As discussed by others, it takes young adults longer and longer to get started in their careers, and there is a corresponding delay in parenthood (Cote, 2000; Salvatore, 2013). More specifically, economic downturns like the economic crash of 2008 put many in a situation where they faced flat, limited, or no wages for extended periods of time (Salvatore, 2013).

Other studies explain the delay in parenting by examining larger, historical social changes such as the women's movement and the sexual revolution. Mills, Rindfuss, McDonald, and te Velde (2011) discussed the fact that by the 1960s women could control fertility. The introduction of oral contraception, aka "the pill," radically altered marriage and parenthood for a generation of women. Goldin and Katz (2002) found that in the 1960s a generation of college educated women experienced an almost instant delay in marriage and parenthood because of access to oral contraception. These women could obtain "the pill" and instead of becoming parents, pursue a career and education (Goldin & Katz, 2002). At the same time, women were experiencing increased opportunities in education and employment, and consequently many postponed becoming a parent, a trend which the abovementioned statistics show continues through the present.

Like marriage and parenthood, we have seen shifts in the role of education in the lives of young people. As discussed in previous chapters young people no longer have the same prospect of living a middle-class lifestyle as their parents and grandparents (Salvatore, 2013). Most emerging adults will need to pursue post-high school education and training to earn higher wages (Arnett, 2000; Cote, 2000; Cote & Allahaar, 1995; Okimoto & Stegall, 1987). The need for more education is rooted in the shift from manufacturing to a service-based economy (Burtless, 1990; Salvatore, 2013, p. 12). Mirel (1991) stated that in the early part of the twentieth century, most Americans worked on farms or in manufacturing. However,

by the end of the twentieth century most had shifted to information and service-based employment (Salvatore, 2013; Salvatore & Taniguchi, 2012).

In the new service economy of the modern era there is a focus on information and technology, which requires additional education and training for many positions, especially for jobs with higher pay and occupational prestige (Arnett, 2015, p. 4). According to Ryan and Baumann (2016) there has been a steady increase in the level of educational attainment over the last sixty years, with young, more educated groups replacing less educated ones. For example, in 2015 almost 60 percent of high school graduates had completed some college or more, and 33 percent of college-educated people reported they had a bachelor degree or higher level of education (Ryan & Baumann, 2016, p. 1). These rates are substantially higher than the 5 percent of adults who had a bachelor's degree or higher in 1940 (Ryan & Baumann, 2016, p. 4).

What do we know about the relevance of education for emerging adults? To review, we know that one of the core reasons emerging adulthood evolved was the increased need for education due to economic changes. These changes have led to a steady increase in the number of people attaining college degrees post-high school from generation to generation. We have also found that due to the need to get more education many men and women postpone marriage and parenthood. Regarding the influence education has on criminal behaviors, and drug use, Salvatore et al. (2012) and Salvatore (2013) found that those with higher levels of education have lower levels of serious offending and heavy substance use during emerging adulthood. Studies and statistics have established that many emerging adults go to college. Now let's turn our attention to what the college experience means for emerging adults.

Few would argue against the notion that higher education is a requirement for many in American society. Scholars have found pursuing higher education acts as a key turning point for the transition of emerging adults into self-sufficient, financially independent adults (Cote, 2000; Salvatore, 2013). Emerging adults know that college is crucial to their long-term income and status in society, offering them wider options of employment opportunities and often higher income. It also provides them opportunities for identity exploration in the abovementioned areas, as well as the chance to make new friends. College also gives emerging adults a chance to explore different areas of study through minors, general education requirements, and free electives. Even if a student is on a path towards becoming an accountant or a lawyer they still have a chance to explore art,

literature, and history. At most colleges or universities, students take general education requirements which allow them to explore areas of interest and if necessary change majors to one that may better suit their personal or professional interests, as many in emerging adulthood do over the course of their college career (Arnett, 2015).

Unlike primary and secondary levels of education, college does not act as a *de facto* childcare provider for students (Salvatore & Taniguchi, 2012). Students are largely free to come and go as they please. Some professors may not even record attendance in classes, leaving it up to the student to be responsible and attend class or to skip at their leisure. The conditions many students face in college are reflective of what Arnett (2004) stated was one of the most transitional periods of life. Arnett (2004) described emerging adults as experiencing great diversity in how they pursue their academic studies and get on a path towards their chosen career. Recall from prior chapters that emerging adulthood is also a period of marked identity exploration, as such emerging adults must find ways to navigate the experience of higher education while retaining some level of focus on their academic studies and professional training, not an easy task for even the most focused student! As we will see in Chap. 6, college provides ample opportunities for experimentation with alcohol, drugs, and sexuality—all of which can be significant distractions when trying to accomplish task-oriented goals laid out by professors. However, for now, we need to consider that many may enter college with little self-discipline, which given the self-directed nature of college level work is necessary for success. Some enjoy the freedom from parents and teachers, enjoying staying up late and sleeping in—without parents to wake them up or teachers to chastise them for lateness. This type of thinking can lead many to flunking out of college or struggling in the first few years (Arnett, 2015).

In addition to adjusting to the independent nature of college life and developing the self-discipline and maturity needed to succeed in college many deal with other challenges, especially the cost of college. We don't have to look too far for an article or website that draws attention to the marked increase in college tuition in recent decades (Arnett, 2015). Many cope with the cost of college by working part time or full time with about 70 percent working full time as they go to school full time and 59 percent working at least part time (Arnett & Schawb, 2012). I know from my own experience the challenges of financing higher education. I was lucky enough to work a job where I could put in my full-time hours over a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; this left me without weekends for a large

chunk of my life, but between working and a partial scholarship I was able to graduate college with minimal debt. Unfortunately, most incur significant college debt by the time they finish their undergraduate education (Kamenetz, 2006).

In sum, unlike prior generations, college is more necessary than ever in the modern economy requiring many emerging adults (whether they want to or not) to enter colleges and universities at ever-increasing rates. Students now face higher tuition costs than in the past, and as we shall see, lower wages than generations of the past. Many lack the maturity, at least in the first year or so, to navigate college-level work, getting lost in a shuffle of distractions ranging from video games and drugs to alcohol and sexual experiences, or simply freedom from their parents. Education is necessary for long-term success in the workplace and gaining occupational prestige. It also acts as a predictor of lower rates of crime and drug use as people age through the life course. We will now turn our attention to our next logical area of examination, employment.

Work is a major area of interest, as prior criminological studies have found employment can be a key factor in desistance from crime (e.g., Laub & Sampson, 2003). Coworkers and bosses can act as mentors and role models, helping guide young people into adult working work and life. They can also act as an individual's social and peer network. For many, work begins in adolescence. Jobs in restaurants and retail are common, though most do not view these jobs as vocations, but as a means to an end, to fund recreational activities, save for college, buy a car, and so forth (Staff, Messersmith, & Schulenberg, 2009). However, for some these jobs may last through college and beyond. My high school job ended up funding my education through my first semester of graduate school. For most emerging adults work becomes much more important than it was in high school. Instead of just focusing on short-term needs, work becomes part of a plan towards long-term goals. During emerging adulthood work becomes a primary concern, like marriage and parenthood, something that will play an essential role in the rest of their lives (Arnett, 2015, p. 170).

Emerging adulthood itself has changed the nature of work. Fifty or sixty years ago, when most got married soon after high school, young women usually only worked for a short period; once their first child was born, most didn't (or couldn't) pursue careers (Modell, 1989). Males, on the other hand, were expected to be the primary breadwinners and face the pressure of finding a job that could support them and their family.

Instead of having the luxury of finding the ‘right’ job, these young men needed to find the job that would allow them to fulfill their role as providers for their families (Arnett, 2015, p. 170).

As we discussed above, both males and females are now getting married later, and now use their late teens and early/mid-twenties to explore possibilities in education and employment, hoping to find the right area that ‘clicks’ for them. Unlike fifty or sixty years ago, women as well as men have options for careers beyond the household. However, unlike the young adult of the 1950s, young people today no longer have the option of working a high paying manufacturing job that will allow them to live a middle-class lifestyle (Arnett, 2015; Cote, 2000; Salvatore, 2013). Most jobs in the modern era require advanced education and credentials. These provide emerging adults great advantages in employment and income relative to those who do not have higher education or additional credentials past a high school education.

Because of the increased need for higher education and credentials we have seen large increases in the number of jobs available for those with more than a high school education relative to those whose education stopped in high school. For example, if we look at data from 1989 through 2012 we see a distinct decrease in positions requiring at least a two-year degree. Conversely, we see a marked decrease in jobs that require only high school (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). We have also seen a corresponding change in earnings. From the early 1970s through the present, we have seen incomes substantially increase overall for those with more education (Salvatore, 2013). In contrast, those with only a high school degree or less had lower incomes and faced unemployment rates three times higher than for those with college degrees (Lauff & Ingels, 2013). In other words, we have seen a distinct rise in the need for higher and higher levels of education which typically offer corresponding higher salaries. At the same time, those with lower levels of education (high school or less) face fewer job prospects and lower salaries (see Fig. 5.2).

We know that more education will make us more money, at least eventually. I can say from my own experience, having worked since I was in grade school I make more money at this point in my life (having earned four college degrees) than I did at my first full-time job, although this doesn’t mean I am by any means wealthy, rich, or live a life of luxury—far from it! However, compared to the restaurant job I had in high school and college I make significantly more money with my education than I probably could have done without an education. It’s important to note that my

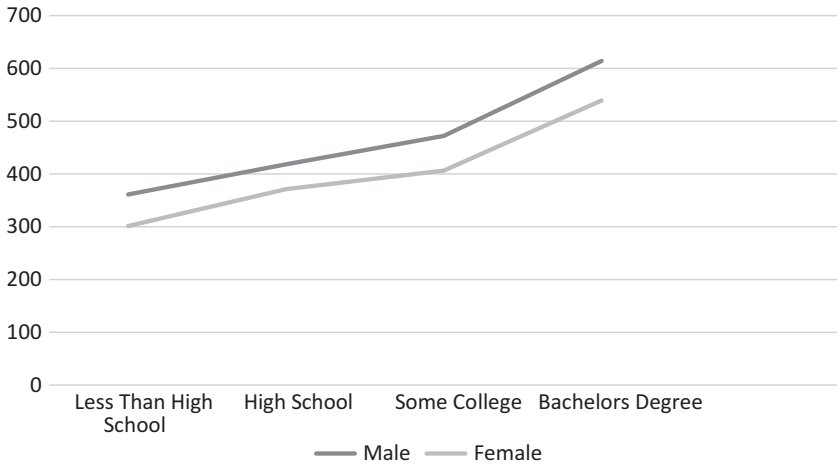


Fig. 5.2 Median weekly earnings by level of educational attainment by gender for full-time workers age 25 and over in first decline of 2017. (Adapted from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/wkyeng.t05.htm>)

road through higher education took thirteen years. Getting through a bachelor's degree, then a master's degree, then a PhD took a lot of time and money—and that didn't even count finding the 'right' job, a challenge many in emerging adulthood struggle with.

As we have discussed, many young people explore and experiment in many areas, including sexuality, substance use, education, and employment (Arnett, 2000, 2004, 2015). Some like Arnett see this as a benefit, allowing young people to transition into adulthood having felt that they have had enough time to experiment and experience and therefore they will be 'settled' and ready to commit to an adult lifestyle. However, for others, the constant shifting of jobs and the search to turn degrees into fulfilling jobs and careers has its downside (Maxell, 2006; Tannock, 2001). Gaps in employment and frequent job changes can have significant negative consequences for lifetime earnings (Burgess, Propper, Ress, & Shearer, 2003; Gregg & Tominey, 2005; Krahn, Howard, & Galambos, 2015).

'Churning' is a term used by labor market economists that refers to frequently changing jobs or moving from employment to unemployment (Burgess, Lane, & Stevens, 2001; Krahn et al., 2015). As we have explored, churning is common in emerging adult populations as they experiment

with their identities, trying on jobs like prior generations would have tried on clothes. Some scholars such as Marquardt (1998) and Osterman (1980) have suggested that churning can lead to floundering, a negative long-term employment outcome that leads to lower long-term wages due to the lack of perceived stability in employment (Krahn et al., 2015, p. 247). The potential long-term negative effects of identity exploration through employment may be issues that emerging adults will face down the road as they reach the mid and end points of their careers. Emerging adults may need to reconsider or perhaps restrict this area of identity exploration unless they are willing to sacrifice their income later in life.

In sum, marriage, parenthood, education, and employment are areas that have experienced radical changes over the last fifty to sixty years. Some of these changes have led to the genesis of emerging adulthood as a distinct stage of the life course; others are experienced by emerging adults more than prior generations. We have now seen several generations of emerging adults. Each has faced a changing labor market, the commodification of higher education, and delayed marriage and parenthood. As this chapter has explored, these areas of life pose unique and distinct challenges for emerging adults. As we move forward through our chapters we will see how these changes impact other behaviors and influence the sex, crime, drugs, and just plain stupid behaviors found in so many emerging adults.

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Emerging Adults and Risky and Dangerous Behaviors

Abstract Emerging adulthood is a period of exploration. During this time experimentation in substance use, sexuality, and other risky and dangerous behaviors are common. These behaviors are examined, statistics regarding prevalence presented, and consequences discussed.

Keywords Alcohol • Risky • Dangerous • Binge drinking • Sexual behaviors

As the title of this book suggests, emerging adults are prone to engage in risky and dangerous behaviors such as unsafe sexual practices, binge drinking, and drunk driving. As we have explored, during emerging adulthood several development tasks are accomplished such as identity formation, which often includes getting the training and education required for future careers by going to college and attaining apprenticeships (White & Jackson, 2005). These tasks can be frustrating and stressful, leading many in emerging adulthood to turn to a variety of behaviors such as binge drinking which can, in turn, lead to more failure and ironically even more stress (Schulenberg, Maggs, & O'Malley, 2003; White & Jackson, 2005). For example, how many of us had (or have) a friend in college who couldn't deal with the stress of tests, readings, and projects, and self-medicated via binge drinking on the weekends or even during the day? Not only did this not resolve their issues with school work, it just made

things worse. In this chapter, we will look at alcohol use, dangerous driving, and sexual behaviors as well as the consequences of these behaviors for emerging adults such as automobile accidents and contracting sexually transmitted infections.

Starting with alcohol, we find a large amount of scholarship identifies binge drinking as a huge challenge for many in emerging adulthood. For example, White and Jackson's (2005) study looked at the effects of the transition from adolescence to adulthood on alcohol-related behavior and found that when removed from the controls of high school and the parental home, emerging adults engaged in high rates of heavy alcohol consumption and experienced higher levels of alcohol-related problems. In another study, Rohrbach, Ringwalt, Ennett, and Vincus (2005) looked at rates of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use from a sample of alternative high school students from adolescence through emerging adulthood. Results of the study showed that those who met traditional turning points such as being married at the five-year follow up, were less likely to use alcohol, as well as tobacco and marijuana.

An important trend identified is that college students are at a much higher risk of binge drinking relative to their non-college attending peers (Arnett, 2015; Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2012; O'Malley & Johnston, 2002). Looking at data from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) we find that 37.9 percent of those going to college between the ages of 18 and 22 reported binge drinking in the past month relative to 32.6 percent of those in the same group not in college (SAMHSA, 2015). This trend has also been explored in the empirical literature. For example, in their 2016 study Reckdenwald, Ford, and Murray used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to study binge drinking in emerging adults. Results of their study revealed that those in the sample who were full-time college students were more likely to binge drink relative to non-college attending emerging adults. There is some evidence to suggest that race may be a factor in explaining these trends, with the relationship between education and alcohol consumption being strongest in whites (Pascal, Bersamin, & Flewelling, 2005).

So why should we be concerned with alcohol consumption or even binge drinking during emerging adulthood? Many of us (including scholars like Arnett and Moffitt) may argue that some level of alcohol consumption is 'normal' and expected. We don't have to look too far into our popular culture to see examples of drunken parties in colleges; movies

ranging from *Animal House* through *Bad Neighbors* show college and university life as filled with parties where for the most part, most people don't suffer too many consequences from drinking. Unfortunately, unlike the movies, there are significant costs and dangers associated with binge drinking in emerging adults. These include drunk driving, dangerous sexual behaviors, alcohol-related deaths, and poor performance in college (Eitle, Taylor, & McNulty-Eitle, 2010, p. 296). Others have found that alcohol is related to sexual assault and date rape (Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005), as well as assaults by other college students who have been consuming alcohol (Hingson et al., 2005). There is also evidence to suggest that people who drink to excess may experience health problems such as gastrointestinal problems and brain damage (Naimi et al., 2003). Studies such as Harford, Yi, and Hilton (2006) found binge drinking in young adulthood can lead to more alcohol abuse related problems later in life.

Now we will turn our attention to tobacco use. I can speak from personal experience that I viewed tobacco use as a relatively 'safe' behavior—yes, I am aware of the long-term negative effects (we will be looking at those next). My thinking during my own emerging adulthood (I actually quit smoking at age 23, so I quit a little past the midpoint of emerging adulthood) was that unlike alcohol or illicit drugs (discussed in the next chapters) smoking, while not a 'good' thing to do, didn't have the instant negative impact on my health, safety, or well-being. I will say I did once throw a cigarette out my car window and have it blow into the back seat where it started a fire—so maybe I can't say there isn't instant danger, especially to back seats!

Tobacco use is one of the leading causes of preventable death in the United States. The use of tobacco, which can include cigarette smoking (considered the most dangerous type of use) and chewable products such as 'snuff', as well as other smokable products like cigars, poses a significant burden for our health system and financial cost in treatment (Adhikari, Kahende, Malarcher, Pechacek, and Tong (2008). According to results from a recent national survey, over 12 million young adults aged 18 to 25 used tobacco products in the past month; this included almost 10 million individuals who were current smokers (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 15). While these numbers sound high, they represent a decrease in tobacco use from the period between 2002 through 2013, in particular, cigarette use (see Fig. 6.1) (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 15).

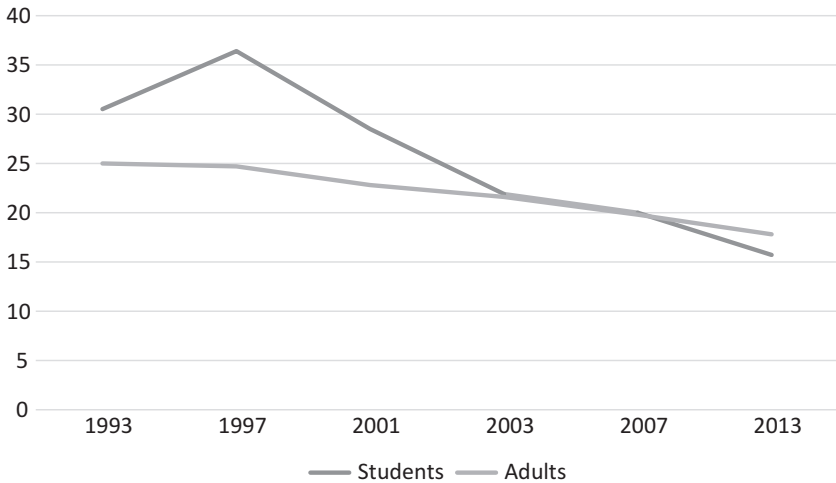


Fig. 6.1 Percentage of students and adult smoking in the United States 1993–2014. (Adapted from https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/tables/trends/cig_smoking/index.htm)

Next, we turn our attention to dangerous and risky driving behaviors. Arnett and Schwab (2012) stated that the number one cause of injury and the biggest threat to emerging adults is automobiles. Across the world in almost all developed nations, automobile crashes are the number one cause of death for people in their twenties and thirties (Arnett, 2015, p. 266; Frick & Kimonis, 2008). Part of this is related to the largely American love affair with automobiles. Compared to other nations, the United States isn't as densely populated, and outside of major cities, many areas have limited public transportation systems (Arnett, 2015, p. 266). As such we have the space to facilitate our love affair with cars and Americans drive more, often reflecting our individualism and independence as a culture. I can recall the side glances and snide remarks that I received as a teenager because I didn't drive at the customary age of 16. I was fortunate enough to live in a largely walkable area that did have ample public transportation in the form of a trolley system that allowed me to delay getting a driver's license until my late teens. In retrospect, I am glad I didn't drive until I was a little older; not only did I avoid some of the negative outcomes related to youth driving, but I held off on expanding my carbon footprint for a few years.

Most of us probably know of or are unfortunate enough to have experienced loss or injury of a loved one due to an automobile accident. If we look at data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, we find that young people between the ages of 16 and 34 are particularly affected, with many accidents concentrated between the ages of 21 and 25 (NHTSA, 2015). These data suggest that young people in general, and those in the emerging adulthood years, are at considerably high risk for an automobile accident.

The high rate of crashes found in young persons may be partially explained by inexperience—most of us will hopefully become better drivers as we age. When we first get our driver's license, we may be overwhelmed by the sense of freedom, distracted by friends (and co-pilots), and we lack the experience to deal with issues and challenges that arise as we drive. However, Arnett (2015) stated that lack of experience may not be the only problem. We see rates of crashes and fatalities reach a peak during emerging adult years (NHTSA, 2015). This might be explained by the risky and dangerous behaviors common in emerging adults (such as binge drinking discussed above). This may be reflected in studies such as Ferguson (2003) and Hingson and White (2010) who found that young drivers are more likely to take more risks than older drivers, including driving while drunk and speeding.

The final key area of risk for emerging adults we will explore in this chapter is sexual behaviors. Studies have consistently found that emerging adults are likely to engage in high rates of casual sex relative to prior generations of young adults (Garcia & Reiber, 2008). Several scholars have argued that casual sex or 'hook-ups' is the norm for many emerging adults (Bogle, 2007; Heldman & Wade, 2010). This is problematic as emerging adults have been found to be at particularly high risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy (Lam & Lefkowitz, 2013). Recent estimates provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention examined rates of common STIs including chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis and reported that almost half of young people aged 15 through 24 contracts an STI (CDC Fact Sheet, 2016) (see Fig. 6.2). In cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea infections young adults aged 20 through 24 accounted for 32 percent and 39 percent of infections respectively. Syphilis rates are also high among emerging adults and have increased in recent years.

High rates of STIs in emerging adults may be explained by lack of consistent use of contraceptives such as condoms to prevent STIs and unwanted

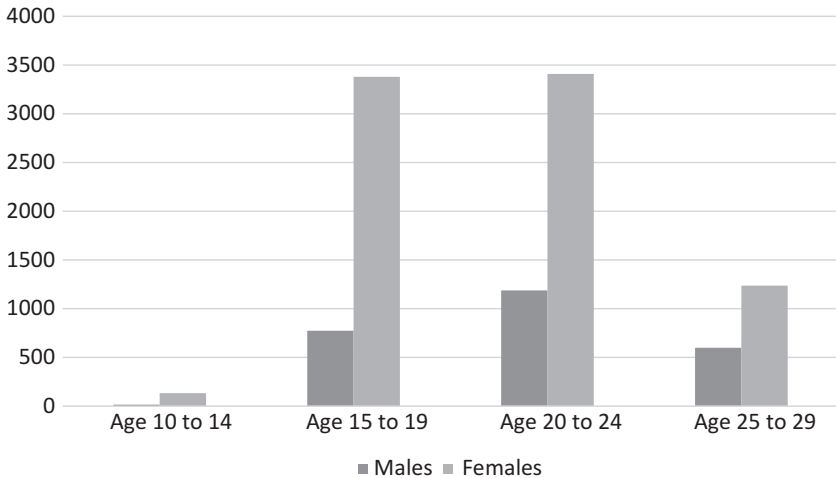


Fig. 6.2 Chlamydia—reported rates per 100,000 population by age group and sex, United States, 2010. (Adapted from <https://www.cdc.gov/std/stats10/tables/10.htm>)

pregnancy. Regnerus and Uecker (2009) found that only 72 percent of unmarried 18- to 23-year-olds used contraception during their most recent sexual experience, and only 51 percent used contraception consistently. These findings suggest emerging adults who are sexually active are taking significant risks when it comes to STIs and unwanted pregnancies.

Given the specter of HIV, syphilis, and a long list of other STIs you would think sexually active emerging adults would be using contraception more often, so why aren't they? Anecdotally, I have heard many argue that prophylactics such as condoms restrict pleasure, limit spontaneity, and prevent passionate encounters. Looking at the literature, studies such as Regnerus and Uecker (2009) support these ideas, as well as the negative physical and emotional effects of the Pill. Arnett (2015, p. 100) also noted that many sexual encounters in emerging adults take place under the influence of alcohol; as such they are unplanned and unprepared for.

In sum, many in emerging adulthood engage in high rates of alcohol consumption, dangerous driving, and risky sexual practices. Scholars like Arnett (2005, 2015) find these behaviors are rooted in sensation seeking and identity exploration. As a period of identity formation and exploration, emerging adulthood is marked by experimentation in a variety of areas

including substance use and sexuality (Arnett, 2015). Removed from the controls of parents and teachers, emerging adults are free to explore these areas. Further, as Arnett (2005) discussed, increased levels of alcohol consumption are somewhat normative in Western cultures due to the developmental changes occurring during emerging adulthood. As such, during periods of binge drinking and sexual exploration, we find many emerging adults participating in other related risky behaviors such as unsafe sexual practices and drunk driving.

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Emerging Adults and Illegal Drugs/ Substance Use

Abstract Substance abuse is common in emerging adulthood. Drug use in emerging adulthood is often explained by identity exploration, stress/anxiety management, and mental health issues. Patterns of illegal drug use are examined, and short and long-term consequences of substance use discussed, including health, education, and legal issues.

Keywords Illegal drugs • Marijuana • Cocaine • Heroin • Education • Work • Mental health

This chapter examines patterns of illegal drug use in emerging adults. As we would expect, emerging adults tend to experiment at relatively high rates. Walters (2014) stated that those in late adolescent and young adulthood tend to have higher rates of drug use relative to younger adolescents and older adults. Emerging adults tend to experiment with risky and dangerous behaviors such as substance use as part of their identity exploration, often motivated by sensation seeking (Arnett, 2005). As Salvatore (2017) argued, the ‘emerging adulthood gap,’ the period of drift and exploration between adolescence and adulthood, may help explain why we see so much substance use in emerging adults. Others argue that high rates of substance use in emerging adults is the result of co-occurring mental health disorders (Davis, Sheidow, Zajac, & McCart, 2012). Further, many in emerging adulthood report high levels of stress and anxiety; the use of

drugs may help provide an escape from these and be a form of self-medication (Arnett, 2015). In this chapter, we will look at patterns of substance use in emerging adults including illicit drugs and prescription drugs. We will also examine the costs and consequences of these behaviors including rates of arrest for crime related to substance use, rates of addiction, and deaths due to overdoses.

As a risky, dangerous, or just plain stupid behavior, drug use follows the same pattern as alcohol use, criminal offending (the focus of Chap. 8), and dangerous driving behaviors with use typically peaking during emerging adulthood and dropping in the late twenties (Arnett, 2015, p. 270). Like any other area, there are trends in substance use as well, many of which are most pronounced in late adolescence through the early twenties. For example, a 2015 report on drug and alcohol use in college-age adults found that after several years of decreasing use, there was a spike to 4.3 percent of adults in this age group using cocaine (a drug that can be smoked, snorted, or injected, and which produces a high) in 2015, a marked increase from a low point of 2.7 percent of this population in 2013 (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, Schulenberg, & Miech, 2016).

In addition to cocaine, there are marked trends in other substances including marijuana, methamphetamines, and heroin. Using data from the 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) we will look at several drugs and examine recent trends in their use by emerging adults. It's important to note that drug use didn't start with recent cohorts of emerging adults; however, it is recent cohorts of emerging adults who may be impacted by a wider variety of drugs or be more apt to turn to drugs to self-medicate their anxieties, or as part of their identity exploration (Arnett, 2005, 2015).

Let's begin with marijuana, as a relatively common drug, that is typically smoked, but can also be ingested with food (e.g., in cookies, brownies). The results of the 2014 NSDUH found that about 20 percent of youth aged 18–25 were current users of marijuana, that's about 1 in 5 individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 in the United States. This wasn't much of an increase from the period between 2010 and 2013, but it was an increase from the survey findings from the period between 2002 and 2009 (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 6). Another common and increasingly problematic issue is the non-medical use of prescription drugs including sedatives, stimulants, pain relievers, and tranquilizers (Walters, 2014). According to the findings of the 2014 NSDUH there were almost one million non-medical users of

pain relievers in 2014 (approximately 3 percent of young adults); this was about the same level of usage found in the 2013 survey, but lower than estimates from the 2002 through 2012 period (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 7). Results were similar regarding tranquilizers with an estimated 416,000 young adults aged 18–25 engaging in the non-medical use of tranquilizers, which was about the same as 2013 estimates, but somewhat lower than those from 2002 to 2012 (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 8).

Regarding the use of sedatives, the 2014 estimates for their use in 18- to 25-year-olds was relatively low at only about 56,000 young adults, the same level of usage in 2014 and in the period from 2002 through 2013 (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 10). When we turn our attention to the non-medical use of methamphetamine and other stimulants, results from the 2014 NSDUH revealed that about 400,000 18- to 25-year-olds were currently non-medical users of stimulants; there were an additional 86,000 methamphetamine users in this age bracket. These numbers reflect the same levels of usage in the 18 through 25-year-old population between 2007 and 2013 but were lower than the findings for the years 2002 through 2006 (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 9). Like cocaine, where we have seen a spike in use recently in emerging adult populations, the use of marijuana has increased since the early 2000's. However, unlike marijuana and cocaine, we have seen a drop in the use of sedatives, stimulants, pain relievers, and tranquilizers since the early part of the twenty-first century.

Perhaps one of the most frightening trends in drug use in recent years has been the return to popularity of heroin (NIDA, 2014). Heroin is one of the most addictive opioids, typically smoked or injected (making it especially dangerous when it comes to blood-borne diseases). Heroin has a significant number of short- and long-term effects which lead many into a cycle of use and addiction that can continue for decades (Walters, 2014). Not only is addiction a core challenge, but there are many related medical issues include collapsed veins, infections of the heart lining, blood-borne diseases including HIV and hepatitis, as well as weight loss and abscesses (Walters, 2014, p. 28). Heroin also involves a particularly difficult withdrawal period for users (Walters, 2014, p. 48).

Despite the well-documented dangers of heroin use, it has increased in use in recent years (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 11; NIDA, 2014). Focusing on rates of use in emerg-

ing adults, the 2014 NSDUH found among young adults aged 18 to 25 an increase in the percentage of those who were current users of heroin in the period from 2010 to 2014, ranging from 0.6 to 0.8 percent of the population. These rates represent an increase from the period from 2002 through 2009, where rates of current use ranged from 0.3 to 0.5 percent of young adults aged 18 to 25 (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 12). As these figures indicate, concern expressed by scholars, public health officials, and the media regarding the resurgence of heroin seems warranted and the figures are of particular note for those studying, working with, or otherwise involved with those in emerging adulthood.

The next category of drugs we shall examine is hallucinogens, a category of drugs including lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), ecstasy (MDMA), and phencyclidine (PCP). These drugs are often made in crude laboratories. They are typically ingested as tablets or tabs, and give the user visual hallucinations (Walters, 2014, pp. 49–50). Looking at the type of usage of two of the more popular hallucinogens, LSD and ecstasy, about 118,000 young adults aged 18 to 25 used LSD and some 270,000 were current users of ecstasy according to the 2014 NSDUH (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 13). These findings reflect similar estimates for most years between 2007 and 2013 suggesting patterns of use in emerging adult populations are relatively stable (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 11).

The last category of illicit drugs we will examine is that of the illegal use of legal substances as glue, paint, paint thinners, aerosol sprays, amyl nitrite, and other ‘huffable’ inhalants. This category of drugs tends to be used more often by younger adolescents than by emerging adults (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 14). Results of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health found the number of current users of inhalants has dropped from most years in the period from 2002 through 2010 (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 14). These findings support the notion that these drugs are more popular with younger teens who may not have access to other drugs.

Now that we understand the types of illicit drugs commonly used by emerging adults, as well as the level of usage in emerging adults, we can examine the impact that drug use has on emerging adults, both in the short and long term. Substance use, motivated by identity exploration, self-medication, or simply as a ‘stupid’ thing to do, has significant costs to emerging adults both in the short and long term. Job loss, developing a

substance abuse problem, damage to relationships, and overdose are all costs and consequences of illicit drug use. Here we will look at some of the costs and consequences.

Substance use disorders are a key challenge related to illicit drug use, impacting physical and mental health, as well as quality of life. High levels of substance use and related disorders are linked to several social problems including crime, loss of productivity, and negative health outcomes (Bouchery, Harwood, Sacks, Simon, & Brewer, 2011; Office of the National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, 2011; Walters, 2014). Substance use disorders are common in emerging adult populations. Findings of the 2014 NSDUH revealed that about 5.7 million young adults aged 18 to 25 (about 16 percent of that population) had substance abuse disorders, slightly lower than the number of substance use disorders in this population from the period between 2002 and 2010 (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2015, p. 11).

A core issue around substance abuse disorders is the impact across multiple life domains; it's not just an issue of the physical addiction and related medical problems. Those with substance abuse disorder typically fail to fulfill obligations at work, school, and home; this can have a negative impact on school performance (perhaps explaining why many in emerging adulthood have problems in college), employment, and relationships. It's not unusual to see arrests for intimate partner violence where the perpetrator has an alcohol or drug disorder (Walters, 2014). I recall an acquaintance during my 'emerging adulthood gap years' in between high school and college. He had struggled with a substance use disorder from early childhood, and by the time I knew him (he was in his early twenties at the time) he had a variety of legal and health challenges. He had apparently developed a neurological disorder which caused him to fall asleep at work. Additionally, he had a litany of legal issues related to his purchase and use of drugs, eventually leading to a confrontation with a police officer which landed him in prison for several years—a sad outcome, but a good example of how drug use can alter our lives in a variety of areas during emerging adulthood.

Perhaps the most dire consequence of illicit drug use in emerging adults is drug overdoses. NIDA (2017) reported a steady increase in rates of drug overdoses over the last several years. This is reflected in college-aged populations. In recent years there have been several cases of college students dying from overdose including a student at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in 2017 (Strunsky, 2017) and a Texas A&M student in

August 2016 (Associated Press, 2016). Not only is there a tragic loss of life caused by overdoses, but there are significant medical costs related to overdosing (Szalavitz, 2011). For example, a study by White, Hingson, Pan, and Yi (2011) that examined the costs associated with alcohol and drug overdose hospitalizations in young adults from 1999 through 2008 found the costs related to overdose hospitalizations during this period steadily increased, exceeding \$1.2 billion annually in 2008.

Another area that is impacted by substance use is education. In recent years there has been an increased level of focus on the impact of substance use on academic outcomes (Arria et al., 2013). Studies have consistently found that drug use is related to poor academic performance and missed classes, and even failure (Arria, O'Grady, Caldeira, Vincent, & Wish, 2008; McCabe, Teter, & Boyd, 2006). In some institutions, a drug violation may result in suspension and loss of momentum towards completing one's degree (Arria et al., 2013). Those of us who went to college (or are currently college students) probably have a friend or classmate experimenting with drugs. Did (or do) you find they were at the top of the class—with assignments in on time, actively participating in class, and performing highly on exams—or were they more likely to be skipping classes and swirling the drain performance wise? Having worked in colleges and universities for a long time (as well as going through several programs), I can almost always identify those students who are engaged in their academic pursuits, or those more focused on partying—it's usually apparent in their class performance, demeanor, and grades.

Arnett (2015) discussed the detrimental impact of substance abuse on emerging adults, especially on employment and relationships. Those struggling with a substance abuse problem may be more apt to come to work late, take sick days, or have other disruptions in their workflow. In other words, substance use disorders may impact their ability to perform at work and meet performance expectations (e.g., attending meetings, submitting work by deadlines (Arnett, 2015, p. 274). Relationships may also be affected. Those with a substance abuse problem may be difficult to deal with, showing up late or missing commitments to friends and family, or being embarrassingly drunk and rude at family occasions (Arnett, 2015, p. 274).

In sum, the use of illicit drugs is prevalent in emerging adult populations. It may be motivated by identity exploration, self-medication, and co-occur with mental illness. There are a wide variety of substances used by emerging adults including marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and inhalants.

Substance abuse disorders impact emerging adults across several areas of life including work, education, and family. In Chap. 8, we will examine the role of crime in emerging adulthood.

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Emerging Adults and Criminal Offending

Abstract Studies suggest emerging adulthood impacts offending in young adults. This chapter presents evidence exploring the influence emerging adulthood has on criminal offending, including the role of turning points and social bonds (e.g., marriage, parenthood, military service). Continuity and persistence in offending are also explored.

Keywords Criminal offender • Emerging adulthood • Social bond • Turning points

It is well established in the sociological, criminological, and social psychological literatures that emerging adults are prone to risky, dangerous, and just plain stupid behaviors. Experimentation with drugs, binge drinking, unsafe sexual practices, and risky driving have been examined in previous research. These behaviors seemed strongly linked to the experimental nature of emerging adulthood and the lack of traditional social bonds like marriage and parenthood that restricted the behavior of young adults in previous generations (Salvatore, 2013, 2017). Like risky and dangerous behaviors such as unsafe sex, crime is an area of challenge for emerging adults. In this chapter, we will look at the rates of offending and types of crimes committed by emerging adults, the influence of emerging adulthood on offending, and how traditional turning points and social bonds influence (or don't influence) criminal offending during emerging adulthood.

Moffitt, Caspi, Harrington, and Milne (2002) suggested emerging adulthood is a fertile stage for criminal offending, with many emerging adults following offending patterns reflective of adolescents, albeit at lower rates (Salvatore, 2013, 2017). Scholars have also found that the role of factors such as marriage, employment, and parenting may influence the desistance process during this stage of the life course (Salvatore, 2017). For example, Salvatore and Taniguchi (2012) explored the influence of social bonds and turning points on offending during emerging adulthood. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, they found that turning points such as parenthood and marriage, and social bonds such as religious participation and job satisfaction reduced offending during emerging adulthood. Further, the results of their study found that gender was a significant predictor of offending during emerging adulthood. A study by Piquero, Brame, Mazerolle, and Haapanen (2002) examined the impact of emergent adulthood on the criminal activity of male parolees released from the California Youth Authority between the ages of 21 and 28. Piquero et al. (2002) found that arrest rates for both non-violent and violent offenses peaked in the early twenties, during emerging adulthood.

Key to discussing crime in any period of the life course is understanding the nature of prevalence defined as the proportion of people who engage in criminal offending at that time. Many studies have found that prevalence tends to peak in the mid to late teens between about the ages of 15 and 19, and decreases through the early twenties (Blumstein, Cohen, Roth, & Visher, 1986). This is reflective of the “age-crime curve,” that suggests most offending starts in late childhood, peaks in the late teens, and decreases thereafter (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). However, we still see offending during emerging adulthood. Unlike adolescent offenders, those committing crime in emerging adulthood are largely subject to the adult criminal justice system, and therefore having a working knowledge of the types and prevalence of crime during emerging adulthood, as well as persistence, is essential. Further, understanding the prevalence and types of crime emerging adults commit will allow us to discuss policy implications and emerging adulthood in general as they relate to the criminal justice system.

We also need to discuss the concept of continuity in offending from adolescence through emerging adulthood. Overall, findings in this area suggest that there may be wide variations in the persistence of offending that vary based on the type of data examined (e.g., looking at self-reported

data vs. official records), and the population being studied (e.g., offenders vs. the general population; Loeber & Farrington, 2012). In keeping with the work of scholars like Moffitt (1993), Loeber and Farrington (2012) argue that youth who started offending earlier in the life course have higher rates of offending relative to other youth, and violent offenders tend to have more continuity in offending compared to non-violent offenders. However, as Le Blanc and Frechette (1989) stated, just because an adolescent engaged in crime, doesn't guarantee their offending will be stable into adulthood. We may need to consider other factors, one of which could be the influence emerging adulthood has on criminal offending.

Studies have found that not all offenses have the same time frame of persistence. For example, Rosenfeld, White, and Esbensen (2012) found that marijuana use has a longer persistence rate, much higher than that of serious theft and violence. Further, they found that drug dealing and possession had the highest rates of persistence. In other words, studies have shown that when we consider the persistence of criminal offending, we need to look at the types of crime; some, such as drug dealing and possession, may continue longer into emerging adulthood (and beyond), whereas others may taper off sooner. Additionally, when looking at offending in emerging adulthood we may find that the chronic youth offenders or life-course persistent offenders (as conceptualized by Moffitt, 1993), may be more likely to be engaging in more serious, persistent offending, relative to those who started offending later in life and committed less serious crimes in adolescence.

To date, many studies support the notion that emerging adulthood impacts offending, and several studies have explored the types of crime in which emerging adults are participating. For example, Salvatore (2013) used data from the publicly accessible version of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent and Adult Health (Add Health) to gauge the types of offenses emerging adults were engaging in. Using these data Salvatore (2013) created index variables that separated the offenses into two categories: (1) Life-Course Persistent Offending, which were more serious, predatory crimes such as burglary and threatening someone with a weapon, and (2) Arrested Adolescent Crime, which were less serious crimes such as damaging property, stealing items worth less than \$50, or using someone's bank or credit card without permission. As expected, the bulk of emerging adults only committed the less predatory "Arrested Adolescent" crimes, whereas only a small number (about 6 percent of the sample) committed the more serious "Life-Course Persistent" crimes.

Salvatore's (2013) findings reflect Moffitt's (1993) and other prior work (e.g., Markowitz & Salvatore, 2012), as well as the idea we have explored here, that among those emerging adults who commit crimes, use drugs, etc., most are the types of lower level behaviors seen in adolescents, along with the other risky/dangerous behaviors such as unsafe sex that we have examined in previous chapters. These findings are reflected in the work of policy-based scholars such as Ishida (2015) who examined young adult offenders (aged 18 to 24) and found that most were admitted to the Cook County jail on misdemeanor and non-violent offenses, a trend which was reflective of the state of Illinois and the nation as a whole.

Other studies such as Loeber, Farrington, Stouthamer-Loeber, and White (2008) have examined specific crime types more closely and have found that most offending peaks earlier in the life course and tends to taper off in early adulthood. Looking at violence and theft using data from the Pittsburgh Youth Study (PYS) Loeber et al. (2008) found that the annual rate of violent offending reached a high of approximately four offenses per individual yearly in the late teens, before decreasing during emerging adulthood. Loeber et al.'s (2008) findings regarding theft from the PYS data followed a similar pattern with theft peaking in late adolescence with between 3.5 and 5.4 thefts per offender, before decreasing in the emerging adulthood years to about two offenses per offender reflecting the age-crime curve.

As with substance abuse and risky sexual practices, studies looking at criminal offending find support for the notion that emerging adulthood influences criminal offending. Recent research, such as Moffitt et al. (2002) and Salvatore et al. (2012), has linked this new developmental stage to new trends in criminal offending over the life course. Vaske, Ward, Boisvert, and Wright's (2012) research buttresses these studies by showing that risk-seeking behavior and levels of self-control are consistent in individuals as they transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood. In fact, the authors show that their average delinquency rates go up when they become emergent adults.

Studies in life course criminology have examined the role of social bonds such as employment, parents, education, and religion, and reaching traditional turning points like getting married, owning property, and having children, in terms of their influence on criminal offending. In their landmark 2003 study, Laub and Sampson conducting a retrospective study of a sub-sample of the men from the Glueck and Glueck (1950) *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* study. At age 70, the men in the sample identified

many key turning points and social bonds that helped most desist from crime. Of the turning points examined in their study, getting married, having children, and military service were all key factors in inhibiting crime (Laub & Sampson, 2003). Many stated that these turning points altered their social networks, geographically removing them from criminogenic communities and other 'bad' influences, and provided structure. For example, men in the study discussed how (for most) once they were married their wives wouldn't tolerate them hanging around with delinquent peers, staying out all night, or getting into trouble. Instead of hanging out with their prior peer network, most of the men found themselves socializing with couples and family members more often. These groups act as stabilizing forces and typically don't tolerate criminal or deviant behavior, as such, they influenced many of the men to desist from crime. Social bonds such as religious participation, attachment to education, and job satisfaction were also identified in Laub and Sampson's (2003) study as being key predictors of desistance. Many of the men discussed how employers and coworkers acted as mentors and friendship networks. As a result, they didn't want to engage in behaviors that would let down their bosses, coworkers, and friends, or endanger their job or professional reputation.

A series of articles have explored the role of turning points and social bonds and how they influence offending during emerging adulthood. In 2009, Marcus used data from Add Health to examine violent offending during emerging adulthood. Reflective of Arnett's work, Marcus (2009) found sensation seeking and violent offending declined as the sample aged out of emerging adulthood and married. In another study, Markowitz and Salvatore (2012) explored race-based differences in patterns of offending across several stages of the life course including emerging adulthood. Results revealed that several social bonds and turning points influenced race-based differences in both less serious and more serious offending including employment status, religious participation, and level of education. More recently Salvatore and Taniguchi (2012) used Add Health data to examine the role of social bonds and turning points identified in the life course literature, in particular Laub and Sampson's (2003) follow-up study with the participants in the Gluecks' *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* (1950) study. The results of their work provided support for the role of social bonds and turning points such as employment, marriage, parenthood, economic stability, and property ownership as influencing desistance during emerging adulthood. Jang and Rhodes (2012) also used Add

Health to examine the effects of strain on crime and drug use during emerging adulthood. Examples of strain that could influence offending and substance use during emerging adulthood include the end of a romantic relationship, loss of a job, or associating with antisocial peers. Jang and Rhodes found that the effects of strain on offending and substance use were mediated during emerging adulthood by social bonds and low self-control. The results of these studies support Arnett's theory, as well as suggesting that there may be an 'emerging adulthood gap' similar to that identified by scholars during adolescence.

In sum, emerging adults, like their younger adolescent peers, are prone to participate in crime. Like most adolescents, the bulk of emerging adults commit relatively low-level non-violent crime. Evidence suggests that once emerging adults reach traditional turning points like marriage and establish social bonds such as those with employers they will generally reduce or desist offending. Building on the work of Moffitt (1993), Salvatore (2017) suggested that there is an 'emerging adult gap' during which the turning points and social bonds that traditionally act to stimulate desistance in most offenders are delayed; as a result we see those in emerging adulthood continuing to offend at the same rates and in the same types of offenses that we see in Moffitt's adolescent limited offenders. While most of these will age out, albeit at a slower rate than prior generations, we need to consider the impact of emerging adults' offending for social institutions, in particular the criminal justice system and higher education. In Chap. 9, we will be looking at specific policy recommendations to help address the offending among emerging adults.

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Implications for Policy and Change

Abstract This chapter explores the challenges that emerging adult populations present to the criminal justice system. Potential policy changes and ways to cope with the risky/dangerous, substance use, and criminal behaviors found in emerging adults are presented. Recommendations for public policy/criminal justice and recommendations for institutions (colleges/universities) are discussed.

Keywords Juvenile justice system • Criminal justice • Policy • Courts • Colleges • Universities

The current juvenile justice system (JJS) evolved over the last sixty years to cope with the distinct challenges of youth who have committed criminal offenses, as well as those who have been identified as delinquent and have been taken into state custody (Marion & Oliver, 2006). The JJS is made up of thousands of agencies ranging from treatment programs, juvenile assessment centers, and treatment-oriented courts, to jails and prisons, which work with offenders aged 18 and younger (Fagin, 2007). The bulk of these offenses are non-index, lower level crimes such as disorderly conduct and vandalism and generally reflect the criteria outlined by Moffitt (1993) as adolescent limited offenders (ALs). These AL offenders usually follow the traditional age-crime curve and ‘age out’ as

they transition to adult social roles such as working full time and becoming a parent, factors that typically act to inhibit offending.

There has been a shift in criminal justice policy from the due process model which was more focused on the treatment of offenders and protection of their individual rights, to a more punitive crime control model for all offenders including juvenile offenders (Aloisi, 2000). Even though the bulk of the evidence suggests that juvenile offenders typically commit less serious offenses, as these offenders age in emerging adulthood, they will be subject to the jurisdiction of the adult criminal justice system. As adult offenders, emerging adults are subject to adult criminal trials and plea bargains (Champion, Hartley, & Rabe, 2008). Emerging adult offenders present a series of distinct challenges for the criminal justice system. First, emerging adults being processed through the courts for committing relatively low-level crimes could increase court costs and the budgets of correctional institutions. Further, emerging adults facing arrest and processing for low-level substance use may require the criminal justice system to increasingly utilize diversion programs such as drug courts instead of incarceration. Finally, for those emerging adults who do find their way into jails and prisons, they would be subject to the criminogenic effects of incarceration, as well as the stigma of being a criminal discussed by many former offenders, that could limit their future opportunities in employment, housing, and social relationships (Laub & Sampson, 2003). As with the criminal justice system, other social institutions may also need to adjust practices to accommodate the risky and dangerous (as well as stupid) behavior indicative of emerging adulthood. Colleges and universities may need to adopt policies that recognize and acknowledge the danger posed by practices such as hazing that occur on college campuses (Peters, 2007). In this chapter, we will examine recommendations for the criminal justice system and colleges and universities that may prove useful in dealing with the behaviors common in emerging adult populations.

Since emerging adults are prone to engage in substance use and crime we need to develop and integrate strategies that can help divert them from the criminal justice system, in particular the correction system. As discussed previously, emerging adults who are formally processed could end up contributing to the overcrowding problem in many jails and prisons and also result in limiting many emerging adults' prospects. We can look at successful strategies that have worked with adolescent populations. One such program is Juvenile Drug Courts. Salvatore, Henderson, Hiller, White, and Samuelson (2010) and Salvatore, Hiller, Samuelson, Henderson, and

White (2011) examined a Juvenile Drug Court program to help understand the role of the courtroom workgroup as well as participants' families in successful outcomes for program participants. The program provided participants with support in the areas of employment, education, substance abuse treatment, individual and family therapy, and life skills. Throughout the program, participants benefited from the non-adversarial, treatment focus of the program which provides a supportive environment, with the goal of resolving the underlying reasons the youth participants were engaging in drug crime. Results of both studies by Salvatore et al. (2010, 2011) suggest that the judge plays a key role, as does family participation in successful outcomes for participants. More recently, Mitchell, Wilson, Eggers, and MacKenzie (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of thirty-four studies and found that relative to non-participants, those who took part in a Juvenile Drug Court had lower rates of recidivism.

The abovementioned studies provide evidence to support the use of Juvenile Drug Courts for non-violent, drug offending youth. The studies discussed were focused on youth before emerging adulthood; however, based on these findings we could argue that the Juvenile Drug Court model could be adopted for emerging adulthood populations in two ways. First, existing Juvenile Drug Courts could simply modify their target populations, allowing participants up to age 25 (provided they meet other program criteria, e.g., non-violent drug offending). Programs could adjust educational goals from completion of high school and applying to college, to applying to college or another training-based education program and completion of the program. A second approach could be to start drug courts that focus exclusively on emerging adult populations. These 'emerging adult' drug courts could utilize the non-adversarial treatment focus used in both juvenile and traditional adult courts, but adopt strategies that consider the unique development and social needs of emerging adults. For example, emerging adult drug courts could provide participants with support in the areas of financial planning, budgeting, and long-term fiscal goals (e.g., home ownership), setting long-term goals (e.g., completing college), time management (e.g., using a calendar to structure time for studying, work, etc.), and stress management (e.g., meditation, therapy). The use of 'emerging adult' drug courts could help provide many emerging adults who self-medicate their stress with drugs, those who are engaging in substance use as part of identity exploration, and those who use drugs or drink due to pressure from friends, the support they need to make less risky and potentially damaging choices. Additionally, the mentoring and support

component of Juvenile Drug Courts identified by Salvatore et al. (2010, 2011) could be integrated into the ‘emerging adult’ drug court model with judges, family members, and other members of the courtroom work-group providing the guidance and direction emerging adults may need to navigate the emerging adult gap identified by Salvatore (2017).

Another program model that has shown promise with youth populations is teen courts. These programs, like Juvenile Drug Courts, adopt an alternative approach to processing lower-level youth offenders. Participants in teen courts typically have been charged with a misdemeanor offense. The operation of individual courts varies, but most programs tend to utilize a jury of the participants’ peers (e.g., other teenagers) to sentence the participant (Godwin, 1996). According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), teen courts offer a viable option in many communities where the juvenile justice system is overwhelmed with more serious offenders (Godwin, 1996). Teen courts can provide participants with coping and life skills and cultivate a culture of positive peer influence for youth participants (Godwin, 1996). Butts and Ortiz (2011) argued that teen courts are a promising model and youth may be fully capable of providing a program that can assist other teens. Studies in this area provide support for their use. For example, the study conducted by Butts, Buck, and Coggeshall (2002) studied teen courts in four states: Alaska, Arizona, Maryland, and Missouri, comparing recidivism outcomes with those who were processed through traditional juvenile justice courts. Results of the study showed that in three of the four sites participants in teen courts had lower rates of recidivism compared to those in traditional juvenile courts (Butts et al., 2002). A more recent study by Gase, Schooley, DeFosset, Stoll, and Kuo (2016) found less support for teen courts. Examining findings from twenty-two studies Gase et al. (2016) revealed only four programs had results that showed a statistically significant impact of teen courts, while the remaining programs either had no effect (ten programs) or showed the traditional juvenile justice court was more effective (one program). These results do not demonstrate such strong support as Butts et al. (2002), but we could argue they provide at least some level of support for the use of teen courts.

While potentially not as useful as Juvenile Drug Courts, there is some evidence to suggest the teen court model is effective and could potentially be modified for use in emerging adults. As with Juvenile Drug Courts, teen courts would need modifications to apply to an emerging adult population. First, since emerging adults are legally adults, it would be necessary to

engage a traditional judge (as the defendants face the adult system). As with the juvenile or adult drug court model the judge in the ‘emerging adult’ court could adopt a non-adversarial treatment approach. This could help facilitate support and treatment instead of punishment. Second, ‘emerging adult’ courts may want to incorporate a traditional prosecutor and defense attorney. As with the judge, they would utilize a treatment focus, but could still give the necessary guidance and support for a participant who is facing the adult criminal justice system’s penalties. With these modifications, a jury of emerging adult peers could be utilized to provide sentencing recommendations and verdicts, with the goal of providing the emerging adult offender the support and treatment services needed to prevent reoffending.

In addition to the use of the modified teen and juvenile drug court models, we have seen other nations adopt other strategies to deal with emerging adult offending. For example, in Germany, the age of juvenile offenders was increased to 20 in 1953 and modified to allow confinement in juvenile treatment facility through age 24 (Clarke, 2015). Germany’s court system also differs from the mainstream US courts in that it looks at the individual’s developmental stage, maturity level, and other factors when considering treatment (Ishida, 2015). The Netherlands also has a long tradition of providing accommodation for emerging adults. Legislation put into place in 2013 called *Adolescentenstrafrecht* allows young offenders from ages 12 through 23 to be processed through juvenile, not adult laws (Pruin & Dunkel, 2015).

Both Germany and the Netherlands reflect an overall more progressive stance towards processing youth offenders in Europe (Pruin & Dunkel, 2015). The application of more juvenile oriented laws and punishments involves considering the unique developmental issues of emerging adults and providing treatment that can address these challenges without the individuals facing the harsher, punitive adult justice system as many do in the United States. European nations may be able to serve as a template for US systems to adapt. Making these modifications to the current US justice system, by modifying the existing juvenile justice system to provide services through emerging adulthood, would not only help emerging adults avoid the stigma associated with being a criminal and the criminogenic effects of incarceration, but would benefit the system as well. The adult system would be relieved of some of the caseload reflective of crime common in emerging adulthood, and jails and prisons would find fewer emerging adults in their populations, thus ameliorating overcrowding in the correction system.

Turning our attention away from the justice system, we now focus on the challenges posed to colleges and universities by emerging adults. Salvatore and Taniguchi (2012) stated that colleges and universities could be a natural location for intervention and community-based treatment programs for emerging adults. This recommendation makes sense since a large portion of college students are heavy drinkers (O'Malley & Johnston, 2015; White & Jackson, 2004) and may also use drugs such as non-prescription use of stimulants (McCabe, Knight, Teter, & Wechsler, 2005) and other drugs (Kyrpi, McCarthy, Coe, & Brown, 2004). In addition to alcohol and substance use, emerging adults may be perpetrators and victims of deviant behaviors and crimes on college campuses. These behaviors may range from cheating (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2002) and rape (Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss, & Wechsler, 2004), to murder (Bryant, 2017).

Since substance use, crime, and deviance (the sex, crime, drugs, and just plain stupid behaviors of this book's title) are so prevalent on college and university campuses, it makes sense to provide prevention, intervention, and treatment services on college campuses. By providing these services not only can schools prevent many from being victimized by crime, services can also be offered to those who have experienced the trauma of criminal victimization. Substance abuse services, for both prevention and treatment, can also be integrated into campus health centers. Even the classroom could be utilized to help address these challenges. First-year experience courses and their various iterations could integrate information on rape, alcohol, drugs, and other potentially problematic issues (e.g., smoking) common in emerging adult populations. Other strategies such as rape prevention programs already exist on many campuses and have shown some degree of success at preventing victimization (Senn et al., 2015). Finally, colleges and universities could also adopt the teen court model, utilizing peer groups to process lower-level offenses, such as cheating, and other common problems in concert with the criminal justice system when necessary, to help divert and process issues on campus instead of through the criminal justice system.

In sum, the presence of emerging adults in the offending and substance abusing populations has implications for the criminal justice system and agencies that service emerging adult populations, primarily colleges and universities. As discussed here, both the criminal justice system and colleges and universities could modify or add practices, policies, and programs that can meet the needs of emerging adult populations. Some of

these programs already exist; others would require modification to existing systems or structures. Other nations have successfully demonstrated that these modifications can help divert emerging adults away from the traditional adult justice system, benefiting not only emerging adults but the criminal justice system as well.

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Conclusions

Abstract Concluding points regarding the impact of emerging adulthood on youth populations and society are presented. General recommendations discussed, and key points summarizing the goals of the book are stated.

Keywords Emerging adults • Conclusion • Generations • Key points

If you are reading this, you have reached the end of this book. I genuinely hope that reading this book has provided insight into what emerging adulthood is, what it means for those who have lived through it or who are still living through it, and the people and agencies that must work with emerging adults. As we have seen, emerging adulthood has been discussed in the social science literature for almost twenty-five years, but despite being examined extensively in the social psychological, sociological, psychological, and criminological literatures it's still something that many aren't familiar with. The primary goal of this book was to provide the reader to help 'spread the word' about emerging adulthood, explaining what it is, how it evolved as a distinct stage of the life course, how it influences behavior, and how agencies like the criminal justice system need to adapt to emerging adult populations. As stated in Chap. 1, this book is in no way, shape, or form meant to be a comprehensive overview of emerging adulthood. However, it has given us a foundational

understanding of a developmental phenomenon that is influencing the lives of our children, students, coworkers, family members, friends, and quite likely yourself as well.

My work in emerging adulthood started in 2006 when I took a course in life course criminology. I came across Arnett's work and was hooked. His work was interesting not only on an academic level, but also on a deeply personal one as well. As someone who lived through emerging adulthood, I didn't take the linear path from high school to college and career which prior generations experienced. I spent a lot of time working in what many would consider 'crap' jobs, restaurants, customer service, and so forth. Those jobs weren't all bad; I made a lot of friends, learned a strong work ethic, the world of business, and was able to fund my (very long) education process. During that period of my life, I was often frustrated at my inability to make the transition to 'real' adulthood. Sure, I had an apartment at 17 but had to move back home once I went to college; there was no way I could afford to go to school and have an apartment, and keep my car running, despite the fact that I was working full time, I simply couldn't generate enough funds to do it all. Even after graduating college and starting graduate school, again working full time I still had to rely on my parents' home as a home base; I just couldn't afford a Master's program and to keep my car running. I used to think that there was something wrong with me—had my choices been that bad? Would I ever be able to get my own apartment again (much less own a home)? Would I ever have a 'real' job? When I read Arnett's work it was like a veil had lifted: it wasn't me after all, instead, it was the very different circumstances which I was living that could help explain my situation. Like many in emerging adulthood, I had to live at home longer than I would have liked (though I was and am still very grateful to my family for their support), it took me far longer than my parents or grandparents to get established professionally, and much longer than them to have my own home.

Learning about emerging adulthood and spending over a decade researching and writing about it has given me a better understanding of my life journey. It has also helped me understand the path and challenges faced by my students, as well as other young people in my family and life. This book is meant to act as a supplement to other materials in a college course, but if a parent came across it while navigating their child's study space, they may flip it open and gain an understanding of why their son or daughter may seem behind the curve or is acting immature for their age.

College professors and instructors, police officers, and others who work with youth populations may find the insights given here useful for understanding emerging adults.

I would like to close on a few key points:

- Emerging adulthood isn't a choice—while not everyone may experience the ups and downs of emerging adulthood, it is important to note that it's a developmental stage that many born post 1960 have experienced. It didn't start with Generation X, Y, or Z, though the more time passes the more the effects of emerging adulthood may be felt.
- Many emerging adults may seem immature, silly, stupid, or just behind the curve. As the title of this book suggests, they are prone to engage in risky, dangerous, and just plain stupid behaviors. Emerging adulthood isn't an excuse, and it doesn't absolve emerging adults (past or present) from their mistakes, but it does help explain why we see more of these risky, dangerous, and stupid behaviors in emerging adults than we did in prior generations of young adults. If you feel your child, friend, family member, student, and so on is struggling with emerging adult related issues and needs help, offer it. Also, while this book focuses on emerging adulthood, there are many other reasons why people engage in risky and dangerous behaviors, including mental health challenges. If you have a family member, friend, coworker, classmate, and so forth who seems to be in crisis, look at other explanations and avenues of support—it may not be (or just be) emerging adulthood. Further, colleges/universities should be able to offer support services, as can mental health professionals, and other counselors.
- Emerging adulthood needs to be considered by the criminal justice system. Like Germany and the Netherlands, we need to engage emerging adulthood in the criminal justice discourse. Most emerging adult offenses are low level and these young offenders would benefit from treatment and support services over incarceration. This could be done by modifying existing systems like the juvenile justice system, using modified juvenile drug or teen courts, or other innovative solutions.
- Scholarship in emerging adulthood needs to continue. As a relatively new area of discourse, emerging adulthood is still a relative unknown for many. It's essential that social scientists in the respective disci-

plines of social psychology, psychology, criminology, and sociology continue to publish, not only in their own disciplines, but across disciplines. We also need work that reaches the public and helps educate parents and educators about emerging adulthood. Hopefully this book is a step in that process!

INDEX

NUMBERS AND SYMBOLS

10 Commandments, 32

A

Adhikari, B., 57
Adolescence, *see* Emerging adulthood;
 Young adulthood
Adolescent limited, 14, 15, 81
Allahar, A., 11, 45
Alternative beliefs and practices, *see*
 Religious beliefs
Americorps, 37
Animal House, *see* Movies
Apple, K. J., 21
Arnett, J. J., vii, 2, 3, 9, 10, 12, 13,
 15, 16, 19–28, 31–38, 41–43,
 45–50, 56, 58–61, 65, 66, 70,
 77, 78, 86, 90
Arrest, 6, 66, 74, 82
Arria, A. M., 70
Associated Press, 70
Automobile accident, *see* Automobiles
Automobiles, 58

B

Badger, S., 26
Bad Neighbors, *see* Movies
Barriers in the workplace, 11
Barry, H., 41
Baumann, K., 46
Bender, K., 15
Bersamin, M., 56
Binge drink, 2, 56
Blumstein, A., 74
Bogle, K. A., 59
Boomerang Kids, 23
Bouchery, E. E., 69
Boyd, C. J., 70
Brain damage, 57
Brain development, 33
Brame, R., 15
Brewer, R. D., 69
Bromnick, R. D., 27
Brown, S., 25, 86
Bryant, C., 86
Burgess, S., 50
Burtless, G., 10, 45

C

Caldeira, K. M., 70
 Carnevale, A. P., 49
 Carroll, J. S., 26
 Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist,
 Wiccan, 4, 33–35
 Cauffman, E., 86
 Center for Behavioral Health Statistics
 and Quality, 57, 66–69
 Center for Disease Control, 12, 59
 Champion, D. J., 82
 Chassin, L., 43
 Children, 12–14, 23, 24, 28, 37, 42,
 43, 76, 90
 Chlamydia, *see* Sexually transmitted
 diseases (STDs); Sexually
 transmitted infections (STIs)
 Christoffersen, K., 37
 Churning, 50
 Cocaine, 66, 67, 70
 Coe, M., 25, 86
 Coffee, 27
 Cohen, J., 74
 Collectivistic, 37
 College, 2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 21, 22,
 24–27, 32, 33, 36, 45–49, 55–57,
 66, 69, 70, 82, 83, 86, 90
 Committed relationship, *see* Romantic
 relationships
 Connolly, J., 21
 Continuity, 74
 Contraception, *see* The Pill
 Co-occurring mental health disorders,
 65
 Corrections system, 82, 85
 Cote, J., 10, 11, 19, 23, 41–46, 49
 Couture, H., 15
 Crime, 6, 16, 32, 48, 51, 66, 69, 71,
 73–78, 81, 82, 85, 86
 Criminal justice, 3, 6, 74, 78, 82, 85,
 86, 89, 91
 Criminal offending, *see* Crime
 Criminogenic effects of incarceration,
 82, 85

Criminology, 3, 43, 76, 90, 92
 Curran, P. J., 26

D

Date rape, 57
 Davidson, H., 37
 Davis, M., 65
 Delinquency, *see* Crime
 Denton, M. L., 33
 Desistance, 48, 74, 77, 78
 Diversion programs, 82
 Dowdall, G. W., 86
 Drug overdoses, 69
 Drug use, 15, 46, 48, 56, 65–70, 78
 Due process model, 82
 Dunkel, F., 85

E

Economic shifts, *see* Employment; Jobs
 Education, 2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 16,
 22–24, 28, 36, 37, 41, 45–51,
 55, 56, 70, 71, 76–78, 83, 90
 Eggers, A., 83
 Eitle, D., 57
 Emerging adulthood, vii, viii, 2–6, 9,
 10, 12–16, 19–28, 31–36, 38,
 41–48, 50, 51, 55–57, 59, 60,
 65, 66, 68, 69, 71, 73–78, 82,
 83, 85, 89–91
 Emerging adulthood gap, 14–17
 Employment, 3, 5, 11, 13, 20, 21, 28,
 41, 45, 46, 48–51, 69, 70, 74,
 76, 77, 82, 83
 Epenshade, T. J., 42
 Erickson, E. H., 20, 21

F

Facio, A., 27
 Farming, *see* Employment
 Farrington, D. P., 75
 Feeling-in between, 20

Feldman, S. S., 86
 Ferguson, S. A., 59
 Five distinct features of emerging
 adulthood, 10
 Flewelling, R. L., 56
 Four Noble Truths, 32
 Friends with Benefits, 13

G

Galambos, N. L., 50
 Garnier-Dykstra, L. M., 70
 Gastrointestinal problems, 57
 Gender, 74
 Generation, 1, 2, 37, 42, 45, 46
 See also Generation X; The Greatest
 Generation; The 'Me'
 Generation; Millennials
Generation Debt, 45
 Generation X, 1, 91
 Germany, 85, 91
 Gillespie, P., 21
 God, 32, 34
 Godwin, T. M., 84
 Goldin, C., 45
 Goldscheider, C., 23, 24
 Goldscheider, F., 23, 24
 Gonorrhea, *see* Sexually transmitted
 diseases (STDs); Sexually
 transmitted infections (STIs)
 Gonzalez-Bararra, A., 11
 Gottfredson, M. R., 25
 Graduate school, 21, 27, 48, 90
 Great Depression, 13
 The 'Greatest Generation', 1
 Greenberger, E., 22
 Gregg, P., 50
 Grimm, B. J., 35

H

Haapanen, R., 15
 Hackett, C., 35
 Haffeejee, B., 15

Hallucinogens, *see* Lysergic acid
 diethylamide (LSD); MDMA
 Hamilton, B. E., 44
 Harford, T. C., 57
 Hartley, R. D., 82
 Harvey, J., 21
 Harwood, H. J., 69
 Hayes, K. A., 21
 Heldman, C., 59
 Heroin, 66, 67, 70
 High school, 3, 11, 14, 21, 25, 42,
 45, 46, 48, 49, 56, 69, 83, 90
 Hilton, M. E., 57
 Hingson, R. W., 70
 Hirschi, T., 25
 Homosexuality, 13
 Hook ups, 21, 59
 Horowitz, A. D., 27
 Howard, A. L., 50
 Husson, A. M., 26

I

Identity exploration, *see* Self-focus
 Inhalants, 68, 70
 Instability, 4, 19–28

J

Jackson, K., 3, 15, 55, 86
 Jobs, 10, 11, 20–23, 25, 46, 48–51,
 90
 Johnston, L. D., 56, 86
 Judeo Christian, 32
 Justice studies, 3
 Juvenile drug court model, 83

K

Kahende, J., 57
 Kahn, A. S., 21
 Kamenetz, A., *see* *Generation Debt*
 Katz, L. F., 45
 Kett, J. F., 42

Kicks, R. E., 26
 Knight, J. R., 86
 Koss, M. P., 86
 Krahn, H. J., 50
 Kypri, K., 25, 86

L

Lam, C. B., 59
 Lambert, T. A., 21
 Lane, J., 50
 Larson, R. W., 25
 Laub, J. H., 32, 43, 48, 77, 82
 Lefkowitz, E. S., 59
 Leonard, K., 12
 Levy, S. A., 26
 Life course persistent offender, 14
 Living wage, *see* Pay enough
 Loeber, R., 75
 Lopez, M. H., 11
 Love and romance, *see* Relationships
 Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), 68

M

MacKenzie, D., 83
 Madsen, S. D., 26
 Maggs, J. L., 55
 Malarcher, A., 57
 Manufacturing, 10, 45, 49
 Marcus, R. F., 15, 77
 Marijuana, 56, 66, 70, 75
 Marion, N. E., 81
 Markowitz, M., 43
 Marriage, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 24,
 41–43, 45, 46, 48, 51, 73, 74,
 77, 78
See also Romantic relationships
 Mata, A. D., 15
 Mathews, T. J., 44
 Maturity gap, 14–16
 Maxwell, N. L., 50
 Mazerolle, P., 15

McCabe, S. E., 70, 86
 McCart, M., 65
 McCarthy, D., 25, 86
 McNamara-Barry, C. M., 26
 McNulty-Eitle, T., 57
 MDMA, 68
 The ‘Me’ Generation, 1
 Messersmith, E. E., 48
 Methamphetamine, 67
 Micocci, F., 27
 Millennials, 1
 Mirel, J. E., 11, 45
 Mitchell, O., 83
 Modell, J., 42, 48
 Modern society, 4
 Moffitt, T., 14–16, 56, 74–76, 78, 81
 Mohler-Kuo, M., 86
 Moral individualism, 37
 Morality, 4, 31–38
 Moral relativism, 32, 37
 morality, 32
 Mortimer, J. T., 21
 Movies, 56, 57

N

National Center for Family &
 Marriage Research, 44
 National Highway Traffic Safety
 Administration, 59
 National Longitudinal Study of
 Adolescent Health, 56, 74
 National Study on Youth and Religion
 (NSYR), 33–36
 National Survey of Family Growth,
 44
 National Survey on Drug Use and
 Health, 56, 66, 68
 Nelson, L. J., 26
 Netherlands, 85, 91
 NIDA, 67, 69
 NSYR, *see* National Study on Youth
 and Religion

O

O'Malley, P. M., 55, 56, 86
 Office of Juvenile Justice and
 Delinquency Prevention, 84
 Okimoto, J. D., 23, 24
 Oliver, W. M., 81
 Optimism, 20, 27, 28

P

Pan, I.-J., 70
 Parenthood, 5, 6, 10, 13, 41–46, 48,
 51, 73, 74, 77
 Parker, K., 42, 43
 Pascal, M. J., 56
 Paul, E. L., 21
 Pay enough, 11
 Peace Corps, 37
 Pearce, L. D., 33
 Pechacek, T., 57
 Personal choice, 36
 Peters, K., 82
 Pew Foundation, 35, 42
 Pew Research Center, 11
 The Pill, 45, 60
 Piquero, A. R., 15
 Pittman, L. D., 26
 Pitts, S. C., 43
 Pittsburgh Youth Study, 76
 Policy, 6, 69, 81–87
 Practitioners, vii, 3
 Premarital sex, 10, 12, 37
 Prevalence, 74
 Professors, vii, 3, 14, 47, 91
 Prolonged adolescence, 21
 Proper, C., 50
 Prost, J., 43
 Pruin, I., 85
 Psychology, 3, 92
 Public policy, *see* Policy

R

Rabe, G. A., 82
 Ravert, R. D., 22
 Rees, H., 50
 Regnerus, M. D., 13, 60
 Relationships, 16, 21, 22, 25, 28, 69, 70
 Religion, *see* Morality
 Religious affiliation, 4, 33–35
 Religious beliefs, 32–35
 Religious participation, 4, 32, 74, 77
 Retrospective studies, 38
 Richmond, A., 26
 Romantic partnerships, *see* Marriage
 Romantic relationships, 3, 5, 14, 20,
 26, 28
 Roth, J. A., 74
 Ryan, C. L., 46

S

Sacks, J. J., 69
 Salvatore, C., 2, 11, 14, 15, 19, 23,
 32, 33, 36, 41–43, 45–47, 49,
 65, 73–78, 82–84, 86
 SAMHSA, 56
 Sampson, R. J., 32, 43, 48, 77, 82
 Schlegel, A., 41
 Schulenberg, J. E., 48, 55
 Schulman, S., 21
 Self-focus, 3, 4, 10, 20, 24–26, 43
 Selfie, 1
 Self-medication, 66, 68, 70
 Senn, C. Y., 86
 Sensation seeking, 5, 22, 60, 65, 77
 Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), 1
 Sexually transmitted infections (STIs),
 32, 56, 59
 Shearer, A., 50
 Sheidow, A., 65
 Sherman, R. A., 12–13

Shoplifting, *see* Crime
 Simon, C. J., 69
 Smith, C., 33, 37
 Smith, N., 49
 Snell-Herzog, P., 37
 Snuff, *see* Tobacco
 Social bond, 3, 6, 14–16, 25, 73, 74, 76–78
 Social controls, *see* Social bond;
 Turning points
 Social networks, 43
 Social psychology, 3, 92
 Sociology, 3, 92
 Spouses, *see* Marriage
 Staff, J., 48
 Stegall, P. J., 23, 24
 Steinberg, L., 33
 Steinberg, L. D., 22
 Stevens, D., 50
 Stress, 55, 65, 83
 Strohl, J., 49
 Strunsky, S., 69
 Stupid behaviors, 4, 9, 14, 51, 66, 73, 86, 91
 Substance use, *see* Drug use
 Syphilis, *see* Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

T

Tanner, J. L., 3
 Tannock, S., 50
 Taylor, J., 57
 Teen courts, 84, 91
 Teter, C. J., 70, 86
 Tobacco, 57
 Tominey, E., 50
 Tong, V., 57
 Tucker, J. S., 3
 Turning point, 3, 6, 14–16, 46, 56, 73, 74, 76–78
 Twenge, J. M., 12–13

U

Uecker, M., 13, 60
 United States, 2, 9, 20, 21, 34, 42, 57, 58, 60, 66, 85
 Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency Study, 43
 Unsafe sex, 2, 5, 43, 76
 U.S. Census Bureau, 12, 23, 42

V

Vacation, 11
 van Dulmen, M. H. M., 15
 Vischer, C. A., 74

W

Wade, L., 59
 Walter, G. D., 67
 Wang, W., 42, 43
 Wechsler, H., 86
 Wells, B. E., 12–13
 Wenzel, A., 21
 White, A. M., 70
 White, H. R., 3, 15, 55, 86
 Wilkie, J. R., 12
 Wilson, D., 83
 World War II, 1, 13

Y

Yi, H. Y., 57, 70
 Yoder, J. R., 15
 Young adulthood, 2, 4, 10, 19, 20, 57, 65
 You Only Live Once (YOLO), 22
 Youth Movement, 10, 13

Z

Zajac, K., 65