



Psychology

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COLLOQUIUM
SERIES

The Psychology Department is please to announce:

Beyond Decline: A Developmental Perspective on Healthy Cognitive Aging



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In-person: Psychology 306
Online: arizona.zoom.us/j/82871800093

ABSTRACT

For decades, the dominant story about healthy cognitive aging has been one of decline. In this talk, I suggest that this perspective is incomplete. Instead, I propose that many cognitive changes observed in healthy aging may reflect adaptive developmental processes driven by experience and evolving goals, rather than simply deficits. I will illustrate this developmental framework through studies of autobiographical memory. Here, I will present evidence that cognitively healthy older adults appear to remember their personal past in ways that are more flexible and goal-directed than traditionally recognized, casting doubt on a purely deficit-based interpretation. I then consider how this developmental perspective might aid efforts to distinguish the earliest cognitive changes associated with Alzheimer's disease from healthy cognitive aging. Finally, I will outline how this developmental framework fits within a broader clinical science perspective that integrates cognitive, clinical, and neuroscientific theories to better understand aging. By reframing healthy cognitive aging as a developmental process rather than a simple story of decline, this work not only changes how we think about healthy aging but also offers a new approach to detecting and treating neurodegenerative diseases.

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