Young and middle adulthood is a period of challenges, rewards, and crises. Challenges may include the demands of working and raising families, although adults can also be rewarded by successes in their career endeavors and in their personal lives. Adults also face crises, such as caring for their aging parents, the possibility of job loss in a challenging economic environment, and dealing with their own developmental needs as well as those of their family members.

Adult development changes are based on earlier characteristics that help shape subsequent behavior and characteristics. Each young person’s development, however, is a unique process. Young adulthood is the period between the late teens and the mid to late thirties, and young adults constitute approximately 27% of the population. During young adulthood, individuals increasingly move away from their families of origins, establish career goals, and decide whether to marry and begin families or remain single. Young adults are active and must adapt to new experiences and newly acquired independence.

Middle age occurs between the mid to late 30s and the mid 60s. The transition to middle age occurs when young persons become aware of changes in reproductive and physical abilities that signify the beginning of another stage in life. This is a time of continuing transitions when individuals may reassess their life goals and add new ones.