

**Rocky Mountain Conference on Aging
Aging in the Workplace**

Life-Span Development and the World of Work

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Presentation Date and Time: October 25, 2007: 1:30-2:30pm

Work environments are changing and need to adjust to the current life-span development prospective. Past models focused on single career path development while today's models focus on multiple career transitions. There are multiple generations in the work environment that need to work and learn together. Today individuals are largely responsible for their own career management.

1. Life-span development theory believes that development is not completed in adulthood but is an ongoing process that extends throughout life. It is important to consider the life-span perspective because changing work environments, including demographics, are not explained fully by traditional models.
2. Past models of career development focused on a single career path and often built in ageism. Today careers are not as secure. There are fewer companies that encourage individuals to stay with the company long-term. Current career models focus on multiple career transitions. This model is not age specific and encourages all age groups to continue to learn and stay up to date.
3. Self-management of career refers to an individual's need to manage his/her own career path. Decisions are based on what the individual brings to the environment, the work environment itself, relationships with family and friends and the community. To keep people in the current work environment employers need to provide flexible schedules, healthcare, and fund pension plans.

Submitted by: Leanna Miller, Colorado State University, October 25, 2007