

# Growing Up Through the Life Cycle: A Revised Psychoanalytic Framework for Adult Development

Steven D. Axelrod, PhD

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Wednesday, October 22nd, 2025

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM EDT

In-Person at Rockland - East Fairmount Park

3810 Mt Pleasant Dr. Philadelphia, PA

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Virtual via Zoom

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**Steven D. Axelrod, PhD**, has created a revised model of adult development and he reconsiders Erikson's original epigenetic scheme of the psychological stages of development in adulthood. Further, his model integrates the observational work of Anna Freud and the recent theorist, Anne Hurry. In his presentation, Dr. Axelrod will elaborate a developmental scheme of tasks and emerging capacities. He will discuss the drivers for individual growth and vitality. His concept of "the drivers of individual growth" includes, but is not limited to, object finding and object usage in both treatment and *in the wild*. In explicating this concept, he will pay special attention to what has been termed the "developmental object" by Anne Hurry and others. Dr. Axelrod will also discuss psychotherapy research and outcome studies to offer a window into the processes of growth in adulthood. He will discuss research evidence that points to the existence of a group of psychotherapy/psychoanalytic patients who show continuing improvement and better adjustment over time post-termination, referred to as "the sleeper effect." He will discuss the factors in treatment and the processes that occur during the post treatment period, that promote and sustain psychological growth.

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# Growing Up Through the Life Cycle: A Revised Psychoanalytic Framework for Adult Development

Steven D. Axelrod, PhD

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## BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Steve Axelrod is a psychoanalyst in independent practice in New York City. He is an Adjunct Associate Professor at the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, where he is Co-Chair of the Independent Track, working to foster innovation and improve the intellectual experience for all members of the Postdoc community. He is a Principal in the Boswell Group of psychodynamic management consultants and is on the board of the Psychotherapy Action Network. Dr. Axelrod is the author of books and articles on adult development, the psychology of work (Work and the Evolving Self (Analytic Press, 1999)), leadership and management, male development, and hospital-based psychiatric treatment. He is the co-editor of Progress in Psychoanalysis: Envisioning the Future of the Profession (Routledge, 2018). This presentation is based in part on his recent article "Growth in adulthood: A revised psychoanalytic framework for adult development" in the 2024 Psychoanalytic Study of the Child.



## EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Attendees will be able to describe three (3) significant ways in which Erikson's epigenetic scheme of adult development can be and/or needs to be revised.
2. Attendees will be able to describe how the revised framework for adult development can be used to enhance their clinical work with patients.
3. Attendees will be able to summarize two main takeaways from follow-ups of psychotherapy outcome studies and how they might shed light on processes of growth in adulthood.

## CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION/CONTINUING EDUCATION

### Continuing Medical Education (CME):

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of American Psychoanalytic Association and the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia. The American Psychoanalytic Association is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

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**IMPORTANT DISCLOSURE INFORMATION FOR ALL LEARNERS:** None of the planners and presenters of this CME program have any relevant financial relationships to disclose.



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The Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia maintains responsibility for this program and its content. Every session of this program offers CE credit for psychologists.

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For more information, please contact the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia:

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