

Caregiving and Network Dynamics: A Life Course Approach

Adam Roth, PhD Candidate
Dept of Sociology, WSU Pullman

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Contrary to classical depictions of older adults slipping into social isolation as they enter later life, recent research suggests that social connectedness is not a pure function of age. Beyond any psychological motivations that may cause them to selectively shrink their social networks, older adults experience a diversity of life transitions that lead to variation in their social lives. Informal caregiving is of particular interest in this realm as unlike other life transitions (e.g., retirement) the call to caregiving is an unexpected shock to the life course. Consequently, the caregiving process holds potential to alter older adults' social networks. Understanding the interplay between caregiving and networks is crucial as older adults are incredibly dependent on others to supply both emotional and instrumental forms of support.



Adam Roth is a PhD candidate in sociology at Washington State University. His research centers on social networks and health among the aging population. Adam recently completed a fellowship through the [Duke Network Analysis Center](#) where he conducted a study on social network dynamics occurring among a nationally-representative sample of older caregivers.