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Age Differences in Problem-solving and Emotion Responses in Interpersonal Conflicts:  
The Role of Time Perspective

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to examine age differences in problem-solving strategies and emotion responses in interpersonal conflicts. In effort to explain the age differences, perceived time left in life was measured as a mediator. The sample consisted of 98 younger adults (aged 17–22) and 108 older adults (aged 61–93) who were residents in Hong Kong. Results showed that older adults were less likely to report negative emotions (sadness, anger and fear) but expressed a higher frequency of positive emotion responses than did younger adults. Fewer problem-focused strategies were endorsed by older adults relative to younger adults, and no significant difference was found in the use of emotion-focused strategies. When the perceived time was controlled for, age differences were eliminated only in the use of problem-solving strategies. Age and closeness of social partner in conflicts also affected the use of problem-solving strategies and emotion responses. Implications for intergenerational communication are discussed.