

# Adolescence

## Unit 3: Biopsychology

# Adolescence


- In some societies, adolescence is not recognized as a separate stage of life, individuals move directly from childhood to adulthood.
- In our society adolescence is looked at as a period of preparation for adult responsibilities. The end of adolescence and beginning of adulthood is often blurry and varies for each person.

**Initiation Rites:** Rites of passage that mark admission into adulthood. Include informal celebrations such as birthdays, as well as formal events such as graduations and weddings.



# Adolescence

Psychologist **Robert Havighurst** points out that every adolescent faces challenges in the form of developmental tasks that must be mastered including:

1. Accepting one's physical makeup and acquiring a gender role
  2. Developing appropriate relations with age-mates of both sexes
  3. Becoming emotionally independent of parents and other adults
  4. Achieving the assurance that one will become economically independent
  5. Deciding on, preparing for, and entering a vocation
  6. Developing the cognitive skills necessary for social competence
  7. Understanding and achieving socially responsible behaviour
  8. Preparing for marriage and family
  9. Acquiring values that are harmonious and appropriate
- 



**Adolescence**: The transition period from childhood to adulthood, extending from puberty to independence.

# Presentations

# Gallery Walk

You will have 2 minutes at each poster to write down as much as you can.

# Gallery Walk

What are some of the major milestones and changes teens go through?

How does this affect development across different domains? (cognitive, moral, social, sexual)

What expectations do you have, your parents have for you?

How does this influence stress and coping?

What is it like being a teen today vs. 30 years ago?

# Teenagers in Crisis

Worksheet

**Before you read:**

Do you believe that it is more difficult to be a teenager today than when your parents grew up? Why or why not?


---



# The Mysterious Workings of the Adolescent Brain

- While you watch the video, take some notes on what you feel to be the important concepts (good practice for university!)
- After I will ask some questions that are examples of what might be on a test/exam.

# Quick Quiz

1. How do we define adolescence?
  2. Gray matter volume in the prefrontal cortex (the area responsible for high level cognitive functions) changes during adolescence.
    - a. How does it change?
    - b. What does this change indicate?
  3. What did the shelf experiment prove about development in the adolescent brain?
  4. What is the function of the limbic system and how does it contribute to risk-taking behaviours in teens?
- 

# Answers

1. **Adolescence:** the period of life that starts with the changes of puberty and ends at the age when an individual attains a stable, independent role in society.
2. a) Gray matter volume **decreases** during adolescence  
b) This indicates **synaptic pruning** is taking place: the brain is trimming down unused pathways to strengthen its communication systems.



# Answers

3. The area of the brain that is used to follow a set of **fixed rules** is done developing by adolescence while the area of the brain responsible for **considering the perspectives of others** is still developing.

4. The **limbic system** is responsible for emotion processing and reward processing. It is **hypersensitive** in adolescence contributing to an increase in risk taking behaviour because they get a greater sensation of reward.



# Physical Development

**Puberty**: The period of sexual maturation, during which a person becomes capable of reproducing.

- Hormones
- Primary and secondary sexual characteristics develop
- Timing is different for everyone and may be uneven between the sexes

Social acceptance is of great importance. Most adolescents evaluate themselves in terms of their culture's body ideal and conform to ideals of how a male or female their age should act, dress, and look.

***How might growth differences affect development?***




# Individual Differences in Growth

## Females

- Disadvantage to early maturers
- Feel embarrassed of height and figure at first
- Some begin dating older boys and may become bossy with others their age
- In their late teens those who matured early may be more popular and have a more favorable image of themselves than those who matured slowly

## Males


- Advantage to those who mature early
  - Leaders in sports and social activities
  - Adults treat them as more mature
  - Early maturers found to have higher occupational and social status into their thirties (this weakens as they age).
- 

# Cognitive Development

During adolescence, the thinking patterns characteristic of adults emerge.

- Enter Piaget's ***formal operations*** stage past age 11
- Thinking becomes abstract
  - hypothetical questions
  - problem solving ability
  - rationalization of powerful emotional feelings

Changing thought patterns are usually associated with changes in personality and social interactions. Some become idealistic, others become impatient with what they see as the adult generation's failures.



## Dr. David Elkind's 6 Problems with Adolescents

1. Finding Fault with Authority Figures
  - discover people fall short of their ideals
2. Argumentativeness
  - practice building their own viewpoints by arguing any problem that presents itself
3. Indecisiveness
  - aware of many choices
4. Apparent Hypocrisy
  - difficulty understanding an ideal AND living up to it
5. Self-Consciousness
  - **Imaginary Audience** - tendency of adolescents to see themselves as the object of others attention and evaluation
6. Invulnerability
  - **Personal Fable** - tendency of adolescents to feel special, unique, and separate from the rules that govern everyone else



# Moral Development

The ability to think abstractly and see things from another's point of view allows adolescents to develop morally.

- Kohlberg's conventional and postconventional morality
- For those who reach **postconventional** morality (stages 5 and 6) adolescence and young adulthood are usually the periods of the most profound development.

***What events in your life have helped you to develop a moral code or sense of right and wrong?***




# Identity Development

Developing a sense of identity becomes important as adolescents begin to think seriously about the future and experience physical and cognitive changes.

**Identity Crisis**: a period of inner conflict during which adolescents worry intensely about who they are and who they will become.

Erikson's ***Identity vs. Role Confusion*** (stage 5) conflict resolves itself as teens resolve issues such as:

- choice of occupation
  - set of values to live by
  - development of sexual identity
- 

# Identity Development

James Marcia (1966) agreed with Erikson that adolescents experience an identity crisis that arises because of the commitments and choices they must make. He suggested 4 attempts to achieve a sense of identity:

Has a crisis been experienced?

Has a  
commitment  
been made?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Yes</b>	Identity achievement	Foreclosure
<b>No</b>	Moratorium	Identity diffusion


# Marcia's Identity Development

**Crisis** - A time when one's values and choices are being reevaluated.

**Commitment** - The end outcome of a crisis leading to a certain role or value.

*You and your friend Sally both applied for a job. The manager brings you in for your interview and tells you that it has come down to you and Sally and asks you to tell her a little bit about Sally's character. What do you tell her?*

**Crisis** - Do I value my career over my friendship and qualities such as loyalty, honesty, and kindness?



# Diffusion

The adolescent does not have a sense of having choices and has not yet made (nor is attempting or willing to make) a commitment.

Has a  
commitment  
been made?

Has a crisis been experienced?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Yes</b>	Identity achievement	Foreclosure
<b>No</b>	Moratorium	Identity diffusion

# Foreclosure

The adolescent seems willing to commit to some relevant roles or values but has not experienced a crisis. They go along with the expectations of others.

Has a commitment been made?

Has a crisis been experienced?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Yes</b>	Identity achievement	Foreclosure
<b>No</b>	Moratorium	Identity diffusion

# Moratorium

The adolescent is currently in a crisis, exploring various commitments, and is ready to make choices, but has not committed to a choice yet.

Has a  
commitment  
been made?

Has a crisis been experienced?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Yes</b>	Identity achievement	Foreclosure
<b>No</b>	Moratorium	Identity diffusion

# Achievement

The adolescent has gone through an identity crisis and has made a commitment to a sense of identity that he/she has chosen.

Has a commitment been made?

Has a crisis been experienced?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Yes</b>	Identity achievement	Foreclosure
<b>No</b>	Moratorium	Identity diffusion



# Social Development

## The Role of the Family

- Families have changed from what they were prior to 1970
- Parents vary in their attachment and parenting styles
- Regardless of family structure one of the important tasks of adolescents is becoming independent of the family



# Social Development

## The Role of Peers

- Adolescents can trust their peers not to treat them like children
- Help fulfil love and belonging needs, develop confidence, build independence from family, form values, and experiment with new roles.
- Drawbacks include the fear of being disliked which can lead to conformity



# Gender Roles and Development

Gender greatly influences how you dress, move, work, and play. It can influence your thoughts and others' thoughts about you.

- *Are there significant psychological differences between males and females?*
- *How do these differences display themselves in behaviour?*
- *Do children learn gender roles or are they born different?*



## Male Gender Roles

- Aggressive, arrogant
- The boss, CEOs
- “I don’t care” attitude, try to be cool
- Foul mouthed
- Basic hygiene products
- Advertisements
  - trucks, tools, beer
- Baggy, saggy or loose clothing
- Emotions - anger, defensive
- Bigger, broad shouldered, muscular

## Female Gender Roles

- laid back, humble
- Stay at home, less successful in careers
- Try hard, more cautious and rational
- “Ladylike”
- Organized, neat
- Makeup and skin care
- Advertisements
  - purses, clothing
- Tighter fitting clothing
- Care more about the opinion of others
- Show more emotion
- Thin, long legs

# Development of Gender Roles



Copyright

[WWW.GREASEMOVIE.COM](http://WWW.GREASEMOVIE.COM)

# Changing Gender Roles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srnaXW9ZgZc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TULVRIpsNWo>

# Gender Roles and Identity

## Gender Identity:

### Textbook

“The sex group (male or female) to which an individual biologically belongs.”

### APA (2006)

“One’s sense of oneself as male, female, or transgender”

- When one’s gender identity and biological sex are not congruent, the individual may identify as transexual or as another transgender category



# Gender Roles and Identity

**Gender Role:** The set of behaviours that society considers appropriate for each sex. Sometimes gender roles become so rigid they result in ***gender stereotypes***.

**Gender Expression:** The way in which a person acts to communicate gender within a given culture.

- Clothing, communication patterns, interests
- Gender expression may or may not be consistent with socially prescribed gender roles and may or may not reflect his or her gender identity





# Gender Differences


Psychologists have found that most people do see differences between genders.

- *What are some differences between males and females?*
- *Are these differences real or imagined?*
- *Are these differences the result of cultural stereotypes or do they show up in actual behaviour of boys and girls?*

These differences exist between **groups** of males and females. Individuals may or may not exhibit these differences.



# Gender Differences in Personality

- Confidence
    - Mednick & Thomas (1993) found that males tend to be more confident than females, especially in academics or in tasks stereotyped as masculine.
    - Female confidence went up when they received clear and direct feedback
  - Aggression
    - Males tend to be more physical
    - Females engage in more verbal aggressive acts
  - Communication Styles
    - Men talk more and interrupt more while they are talking
    - Women are more likely to use hedges in speech (ex. “kind of”) and more tag questions (ex. “okay”)
    - Women talk more if they have more power in the relationship
- 

# Gender Differences in Cognitive Abilities

There are very few cognitive differences between men and women. Hyde and Linn (1988) examined 165 studies and found:

- No measurable differences in verbal skills or mathematics
- Males and females perform about the same in problem solving until high school, at that point Males outperform females
- Men also perform better than females on tests of spatial ability though women are better at tracking objects.



# Origins of Gender Differences

- Biological Theory

- Emphasizes the role of anatomy, hormones, and brain organization.
- Claim differences are the result of behaviors that evolved from early men and women.

ex) Men increase their chances of finding a mate by behaving aggressively

- Psychoanalytical Theory

- When a child identifies with a parent of the same sex, gender identity results.
- Critics argue that identification is the result, rather than the cause, of gender typing.

ex) Little boys imitating their fathers



# Origins of Gender Differences

- **Social Learning Theory**


- Emphasizes the role of social processes on how we perceive, organize, and use information.
- Children learn by observing and imitating models such as parents, friends, and teachers.

ex) Parents may buy trucks for boys and Barbies for girls

- **Cognitive-Developmental Theory**

- Proposes that children acquire gender roles by interacting with their environment and thinking about those experiences.
- As they do this they learn standards for male and female behaviour.

ex) A child first sees him or herself as either male or female, and then organizes behaviour around this concept (or schema).





# Media Review Assignment