

Surviving Adolescence: Tools For Parents

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Introductions / Agenda

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Adolescent Development

Adolescent Anxiety & Stress

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Peer / Parent Relationships

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Adolescent Development

New ages: 10-24 years old (Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne, Patton, 2018)

Primary Challenges:

- Biological and sexual maturation
 - Puberty, physical growth
- Development of personal identity
- Development of peer relationships (intimate/sexual and otherwise)
 - Separating from family, dating
- Establishment of independent and autonomy in sociocultural context
 - Jobs, Renegotiating rules at home (Christie & Viner, 2005)



Walking the Middle Path (Rathus & Miller, 2015)

Typical	Not Typical: Cause of Concern
Increased moodiness	Intense, painful, long-lasting moods; risky mood-dependent behaviors, major depression or panic attacks; self-injury or suicidal thinking
Increased self-consciousness, increased focus on body image	Social phobia or withdrawal; perfectionism and unrealistic standards; bingeing, purging, or restricted eating; obsessive about or neglectful of hygiene
Increased dawdling	Multiple distraction to point of not being able to complete homework or projects, lacks focus that interferes with daily work or takts , regularly late to appointments

Walking the Middle Path (Rathus & Miller, 2015)

Typical	Not Typical: Cause of Concern
Increased parent-adolescent conflict	Verbal or physical aggression, running away
Experimenting with drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes (though not encouraged)	Substance abuse, selling drugs, substance-using peer group
Stressful transitions to middle and high school	School refusal; bullying or being bullier; lack of connection to school or peers; school truancy, failure, or dropout

Walking the Middle Path (Rathus & Miller, 2015)

Typical	Not Typical: Cause of Concern
Increased argumentativeness, idealism, and being opinionated	Rebellious questioning of social rules and conventions; causing trouble with family members, teachers, or others who attempt to assert authority over the adolescent
Increased sexual maturation; sexual interest or experimentation	Sexual promiscuity, multiple partners, unsafe sexual practices, pregnancy
Increased desire for privacy	Isolation from family; breakdown of communication, routine lying, and hiding things

Walking the Middle Path (Rathus & Miller, 2015)

Typical	Not Typical: Cause of Concern
Strong interest in technology; social media	Many hours per day spent on computer, on high-risk or triggering webstirs; casually meeting partners online; revealing too much (i.e. "sexting", overly personal posts on Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, blogs, etc.)
Messy room	Old, rotting food; teen not able to find basic necessities; dirty clothes covering floor chronically
Sleep cycle shifts later (urge to be a "night owl" and to sleep late on weekends)	Often up nearly all night; sleeps almost all day on weekends; routinely later (or missing school) because of sleep schedule

Adolescent Stress & Anxiety

Anxiety is the most common mental health problem in adolescence:

- 31.9% of adolescents experience an anxiety disorder (Merikangas et al., 2010)

Common Symptoms of Anxiety (APA, 2013):

- Anxiety/Worry
- Inability to manage symptoms
- Restlessness
- Tires easily
- Problems concentrating
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Problems with sleep



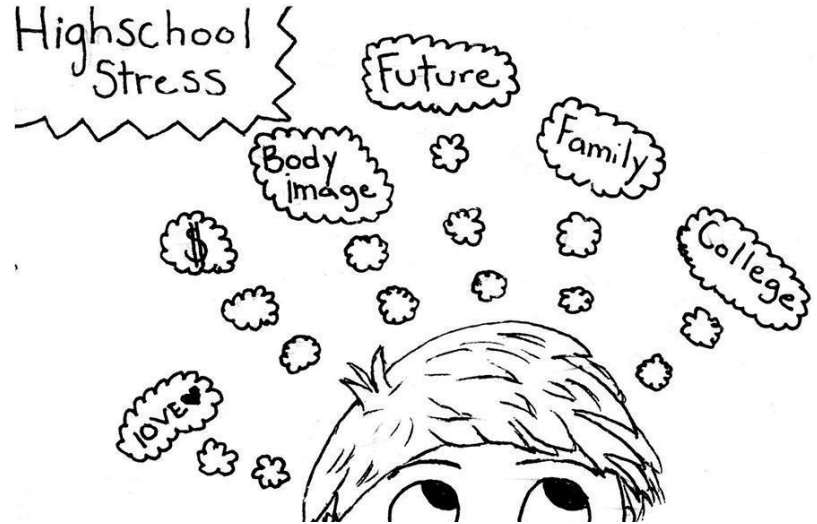
Adolescent Stress & Anxiety

27% of teens report experiencing a level of stress that is an 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale during the school year

Only 16% report that their stress level has declined in the past year

Top Reasons for Stress in Teens:

- 83% school
- 69% getting into a good college/deciding what to do after high school
- 65% financial concerns for their family



Adolescent Stress & Anxiety

Due to stress:

- 40% neglected their responsibilities at home
- 21% neglected their responsibilities at work or school
- 26% report snapping at or being short with classmates or teammates
- 29% report general procrastination due to stress

Teen girls report an average stress level in the past month of 5.1 on a 10-point scale - higher than boys reported average stress level of 4.1 - and on par with what adults report experiencing (5.1)

Healthy Boundaries

Boundaries are limits set naturally or imposed

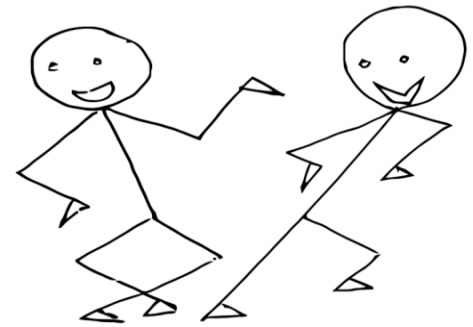
- Necessary to allow healthy development
- When set by parents
 - Allow safe environment to learn about repercussions and rewards (do not rescue)

Parent/Adolescent Relationships are like kite flying



- Kites need open space to soar- hovering limbs limit their abilities to fly
- Kites need to be attached firmly to a strong ball of string. Do NOT LET GO not matter how windy it gets
- Kites start flying with a small amount of string, but with increased success (responsibility) kites need more string to continue to fly
- Kites need balance to fly, their head cannot weigh more than their tail. Boundaries provide balance.

Adolescent Peer Relationships



1. Peer relationships important in transition to adulthood
 - Spend more times with peers than anyone else
2. Peer relationships are complex
 - Negotiation is complicated
3. Friends are picked with similarity and influence
 - Can grow more similar

Adolescent Peer Relationships

4. Status is important
 - Hierarchies emerge, there is a pecking order
5. Social Skills are important
 - Makes navigating social relationships easier
6. Acceptance is a good indicator for adjustment
7. Self perception is unreliable
8. Peer relationships are moderately stable

Statistics

- 84% of teens say “nurture” is more important than “nature” and parents play a large role in that
- Teens rank #1 Honesty and #2 Friendship as most important values
- 97% learn “manners” from home
- 41% say best things happen with friends; 31% say best things happen at home

Experiential Activities

Questions?