

Normal Adolescent Development

(Middle School and Early High School Years)

Parents are often worried or confused by changes in their teenagers. The following information should help parents understand this phase of development. Each teenager is an individual with a unique personality, special interests, likes and dislikes. However, there are also numerous developmental issues everyone faces during the adolescent years. The normal feelings and behaviors of the middle school and early high school adolescent are described here:

Movement Towards Independence

Struggle With Sense Of Identity

Feeling Awkward Or Strange About One's Self And One's Body

Focus On Self, Alternating Between High Expectations And Poor Self- Concept

Interests And Clothing Style Influenced By Peer Group

Moodiness

Improved Ability To Use Speech To Express One's Self

Realization Parents Are Not Perfect; Identification Of Their Faults

Less Overt Affection Shown To Parents, With Occasional Rudeness

Complaints Parents Interfere With Independence

Tendency To Return To Childish Behavior, Particularly When Stressed

Mostly Interested In The Present, Limited Thoughts Of The Future

Intellectual Interests Expand And Gain In Importance

Greater Ability To Do Work (Physical, Mental, Emotional)

Sexuality

Display Shyness, Blushing And Modesty

Girls Develop Physically Sooner Than Boys

Increased Interest In The Opposite Sex

Movement Toward Heterosexuality With Fears Of Homosexuality

Concerns Regarding Physical And Sexual Attractiveness To Others

Frequently Changing Relationships

Worries About Being Normal (Morals, Values, And Self-Direction)

Rule And Limit Testing

Capacity For Abstract Thought

Development Of Ideals And Selection Of Role Models

More Consistent Evidence Of Conscience

Experimentation With Sex And Drugs (Cigarettes, Alcohol, And Marijuana)

Teenagers do vary slightly from the above descriptions but the feelings and behaviors are, in general, considered normal for each stage of adolescence.

