

Adolescent Cognitive Development & Decision-Making



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Adolescence

An important developmental stage that moves an individual from being a child to being an adult. It's more than just a "phase" to survive.



Adolescence

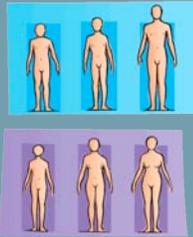
A period of accomplishing significant developmental tasks - an active (not passive) process that requires effort.



Adolescence

- Early
10 - 14 years
- Middle
15 - 17 years
- Late
18 - 24 years

Physical Changes



Characteristic Behaviors



- Egocentrism increases in early adolescence.
- Contributes to a feeling of being completely unique; so much so that no one can understand you.
- Makes it hard to understand perspectives other than one's own ("it's not a problem for me").



Cognitive Development

Being aware of and thinking about one's own thinking – contributes to a common 'cognitive error' of teens...

"If I'm thinking about me, then you must be thinking about me too."



Cognitive Development

- Shift from concrete to abstract thinking
- Not a distinct or continuous process
- Highly dependent on context
- Needs experience to fully develop

Abstract Thinking

- Involves changes in...
 - Perspective
 - Patterns
 - Possibilities



Brain Development



The part of the brain that governs impulse control, delaying gratification, motivation, and planning is still being developed during adolescence.

Brain Development



Because of how the adolescent brain is 'wired' they often respond to situations based on their 'gut reactions'.



Risk Behaviors

- Behaviors that threaten an adolescent's health, well-being, and transition toward successful young adulthood.



Adolescent Decision-Making

- Complex developmental challenges for effective risk assessment.
- Less experience with the decision-making process.
- Often don't gather all the information necessary to make a good decision.

Adolescent Decision-Making

- Often fixate on some *initial possibility*.
- Less cognitive capacity to anticipate and recognize harm as an *unintended result* of their decisions.
- Emerging autonomy can make it hard to accept adults' input.

Effective Communication

- Takes into consideration...
 - Developmental maturity
 - Characteristic behaviors
 - Cognitive development
 - Decision-making ability



Acknowledgements

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