

Characteristics of Adolescent

**COURSE: CLINICAL ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION
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ADOLESCENCE

The term adolescence is commonly used to describe the transition stage between childhood and adulthood. Adolescences also equated to both the terms “teenage years” and “puberty.” However adolescence is not exclusive to either of these terms. Puberty refers to the hormonal changes that occur in early youth; and the period of adolescence can extend well beyond the teenage years. In fact, there is no one scientific definition of adolescence or set age boundary.



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Adolescence (**Latin Adollescirtia from adolescere, to grow up**).

Macmillan Dictionary for Students Macmillan (1981) is the period of psychological, social and physical transition between children and adulthood. This age begins from **13 years and continues till maturity**. The ages of adolescence vary by culture.

The world Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as **the period of life between 10 and 19 years of age**.

In contrast, in **the United States**, adolescence is generally considered to begin somewhere between ages **12 and 14 and end at 19 or 20**. As distinct from the word **“teenager”** is more easily defined, it describe a person who is thirteen to nineteen years of age. (Smith S.R. 2007).



ADOLESCENCE

A thorough understanding of adolescence in society depends on information from various perspectives, most importantly from the areas of psychology, biology, history, sociology, education, and anthropology. Within all of these perspectives, adolescence is viewed as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood whose cultural purpose is the preparation of children for adult roles. (Larson R. Wilson S. 2004).

The thoughts, ideas and concepts developed at this period of life greatly influence one's future life, playing a major role in character and personality formation. (Choudhury S. Blakemore S.J. Charman T. 2006).

Early in adolescence, cognitive development result in greater self-awareness, greater awareness of others and their thoughts and judgments, the ability to think about future possibilities, and the ability to consider multiple possibilities at once. As a result, adolescents experience a significant shift from the simple, concrete, and global self-descriptions typical of young children; as children, they defined themselves with physical traits whereas as adolescents, they define themselves based on their values, thoughts and opinions. (Markus H. Nurius P. 1986).

ADOLESCENCE

According to provisional census report of 2001, adolescents constitute **23 percent** of total population of our country. It is also a crucial period and stage of personality makeup i.e. **a period between childhood and adulthood.** Adolescence is the period through which a **growing person makes transition from childhood to maturity.**



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Adolescence is an Important Period


While all periods in the life span are important, some are more important than others because of their immediate effects on attitudes and behavior, whereas others are significant because of their long term effects. **Adolescence is one of the periods when both the immediate effects and long term effects are important. Some periods are important for their physical and some for their psychological effects. Adolescence is important for both.**



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Adolescence is a Transitional Period

Transition does not mean a break with or a change from has gone before but rather **a passage from one stage of to another.** During any transitional period, the individual's status is vague and there is confusion about the roles the individual is expected to play. **The adolescent, at this time, is neither a child nor an adult.** If adolescents behave like children, they are told to “act their age.” If they try to act like adults, they are often accused of being “too big for their britches” and are reprovved for their attempts to act like adults. On the other hand, the ambiguous status of today's adolescents is advantageous in that it gives them time to try out different lifestyles and decide what patterns of behavior, values, and attitudes meet their needs best.



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Adolescence Is a Period of Change

The rate of change in attitudes and behavior during adolescence parallels the rate of physical change. During early adolescence, when physical changes are rapid, changes in attitudes and behavior are also rapid. As physical changes slow down, so do attitudinal and behavioral changes.

There are five almost universal concomitants of the changes that occur during adolescence.

The first is heightened emotionality, the intensity of which depends on the rate at which the physical and psychological changes are taking place. Because these changes normally occur more rapidly during early adolescence, heightened emotionality is generally more pronounced in early than in late adolescence.

Second, the rapid changes that accompany sexual maturing make young adolescents unsure of themselves, of their capacities, and of their interests. They have strong feelings of instability which are often intensified by the ambiguous treatment they receive from parents and teachers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Third, changes in their bodies, their interests, and in the roles the social group expects them to play create new problems.

Fourth, as interests and behavior patterns change, so do values. What was important to them as children seems less important to them now that they are near adults. They recognize quality as more important than quantity.

Fifth, most adolescents are ambivalent about changes. While they want and demand independence, they often dread the responsibilities that go with independence and question their ability to cope with these responsibilities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Adolescence Is a Problem Age

While every age has its problems, those of adolescence are often especially difficult for boys and girls to cope with. There are two reasons for this.

First, throughout childhood, their problems were met and solved, in part at least, by parents and teachers. As a result, many adolescents are inexperienced in coping with problems alone.


Second, because adolescents want to feel that they are independent, they demand the right of coping with their own problems, rebuffing attempts on the part of parents and teachers to help them.

Because of their inability to cope with problems alone as well as they believe they can, many adolescents find that the solutions do not always come up to their expectations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Adolescence is a time of Search for identity

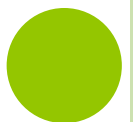
Adolescence is a time when teenagers begin to explore and assert their personal identities. **During this developmental period, teenagers engage in a process of searching for where they fit in with peers and society at large. The identity the adolescent seeks to clarify is who he is, what his role in society is to be?** It is common for adolescents to have an unstable sense of self and try out new personal labels and associate with various peer groups. Additionally, adolescents might struggle to define their sexual and gender identity during the teenage years. While these unstable identity issues are a common part of early adolescence, they tend to stabilize between the ages of 19 and 21, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent's "Facts for Families," as cited by the Early Head Start National Resource Center.



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Peer Relationships

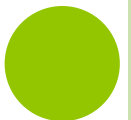
During adolescence, **relationships with peers begin to take precedence over relationships with the family.** Although family interactions are still important and essential for a teen's development, adolescents often place a stronger emphasis on their friends' perceptions and values. Likewise, during the adolescent years, teens might be strongly influenced by their peers' beliefs and behaviors. Paired with adolescents' limited life experience and under-developed decision-making skills, teenagers are often vulnerable to negative peer pressure.



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Adolescence Is the Threshold of Adulthood

As adolescents approach legal maturity, they are anxious to shed the stereotype of teenagers and to create the impression that they are near-adults. Dressing and acting like adults, they discover, are not always enough. So, they begin to concentrate on behavior that is associated with the adult status- smoking, drinking, using drugs, and engaging in sex. They believe that this behavior will create the image they desire.



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT

Independence and Testing Boundaries

Adolescents often **test parents' and teachers' rules and boundaries**. Although this rebellious behavior might seem oppositional to parents, in most cases, this behavior is driven by the adolescent's need to develop autonomy, experience new activities and earn more independence, explains the American Psychological Association. Even though teenagers can benefit from testing boundaries during adolescence, they still require rules and boundaries if they are to avoid negative influences and achieve their potential.

Self-centered Attitudes

It is often difficult for adolescents to look at circumstances from other people's perspectives. This is due, in part, to their still-developing brain structures. Thus, **adolescents might come off as self-centered and focused on their own needs without considering how those needs affect others**. This apparent lack of empathy is normal and typically resolves itself once a teen reaches the end of adolescence. However, a complete lack of empathy in adolescents could mean a more significant underlying mental health issue exists. If that's the case, consult a mental health worker.



THANK YOU

