



psychiatry

435

Psychological & Behavioral Changes of Adolescence

- ❖ **Color index:** RED important, PINK notes and GREY:extra.
- ❖ **Resources:** 435 Girls & boys slides.
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🎯 Objectives:

- Know the adolescence definition.
- Know the **physical changes** in adolescence.
- Know the **behavioral changes** in adolescence.
- Know the **emotional changes** in adolescence.
- Know the **cognitive changes** in adolescence.
- Know the **social changes** in adolescence.

“ The conflict between the need to belong to a group and the need to be seen as unique and individual is the dominant struggle of adolescence ” - Jeanne Elium

 [Brain changes during adolescence \(Interesting!\)](#)

Revised by
خولة العمري & هشام الغنيلي

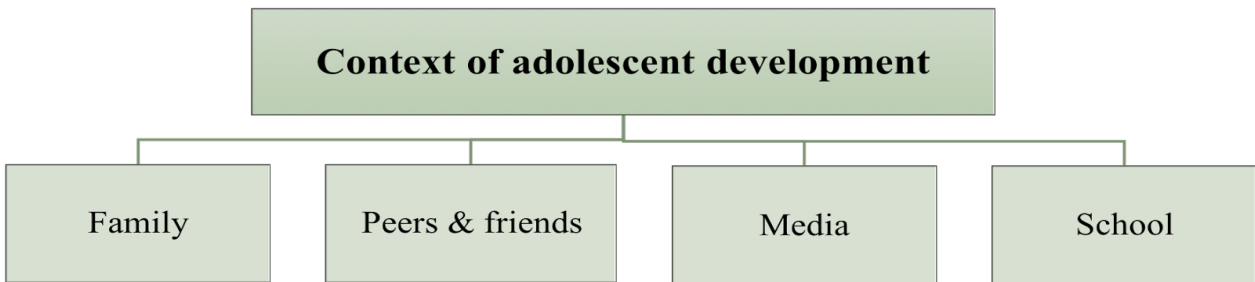
❖ Definition of adolescence:

Adolescence is a period of global & pervasive changes and NOT a matter of developmental crisis. The World Health Organization (**WHO**) defines adolescents as those people between 10 and 19 years of age.

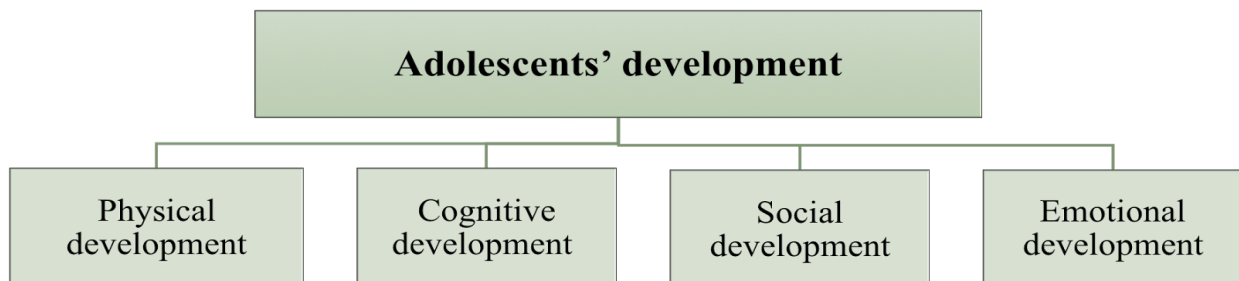
Other overlapping terms used in this report are youth (defined by the United Nations as 15–24 years) and young people (10–24 years), a term used by WHO and others to combine adolescents and youth.

- Most of adolescents pass through it smoothly.
- Averagely, it expands between 10-12 and 19-20 years of age. Thus the great majority of adolescent are included in the age-based definition of “Child”, as a person under the age of 18
We divide the adolescence period into 3 phases : (Early, middle and late)
- The period of adolescence lasts till the individual becomes a young man or woman.

❖ Context of adolescent development:



في المدرسة مثلاً، الطلاب غالباً يعتبرون المعلم قدوة فمممكن يتأثرون فيه إلى حد تقمص شخصيته. كذلك الميديا (مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي مثلاً) لها تأثير كبير على هذه الفئة العمرية.



❖ Adolescents' development:

1) Physical development : maturing bodies, independence striving

- Puberty :

What is the difference between puberty and adolescence? *puberty* is the process of physical changes by which *adolescents* reach sexual maturity so, *Puberty* refers to the bodily changes, while *adolescence* is the period of psychological and social transition between childhood and adulthood.

- Primary and Secondary sexual characters :

Primary = gonads (Testis/Ovary) = Gonadarche

Secondary = Pubic and axillary hair, breast development in females, deepening of voice in males...etc.

- Increased hormonal release. High octane fuel

لخبطة هرمونات ممكن تؤدي إلى زيادة الكسل والخمول (Ex: GH)

- Fast & disproportional growth. Which has a strong psychological impact

- Health status.

What are the Psychological consequences of physical changes ?

- Embarrassment
- Sensitivity to criticism¹
- Social isolation
- Sadness
- Irritability

2) Cognitive development : ²

- IQ & special talents المهارات التي يكتسبها خلال هذه المرحلة، غالباً يكون متعلماً منذ الصغر
- Attention span & concentration (Increase)
- Perception & deep meanings
- Memorizing Ability to learn languages
- **Day-dreams** تصنف كأهم مشكلة تواجه المراهقين، لكن ممكن تكون لها مميزات مثل كسر القلق والتخطيط للمستقبل
- Thinking
- Idealism يتوقعون من الآخرين تصرفات مثالية جداً ويغضون النظر عن تصرفاتهم
- Independence
- Identity. يصير عندهم تذبذب في الشخصية، مثلاً البنات فجأة تصير ملتزمة وفجأة تقرر تصير العكس.

3) Social development:

Social relationship during adolescence with parents, friends, etc..

² [Further reading](#)

4) Emotional development:

- Extreme & inconsistent
- Impulsivity & recklessness³
- Anger & easily provocation
- Looking for self-assertion
- Authority resistance
- Critical comments
- Love & romance

My 15 year old son:

Scenario:

“ My 15 year old son, Saif, is rude, won't talk at dinner, wants to just hang out in his room, won't share any information with us, cares more about his electronics than anything, becomes irrational when we confront him, hogs the bathroom, is highly emotionally reactive, and has lied, snuck out and smokes cigarettes sometimes and violated our internet rules.”

“A website on drug abuse cited these warning signs:

- withdrawal
- moodiness
- increased family conflict
- argumentativeness
- over-reactivity to criticism
- sloppiness in appearance
- spending time isolating in room
- poor attitude
- disrespect
- loss of interest in family activities.
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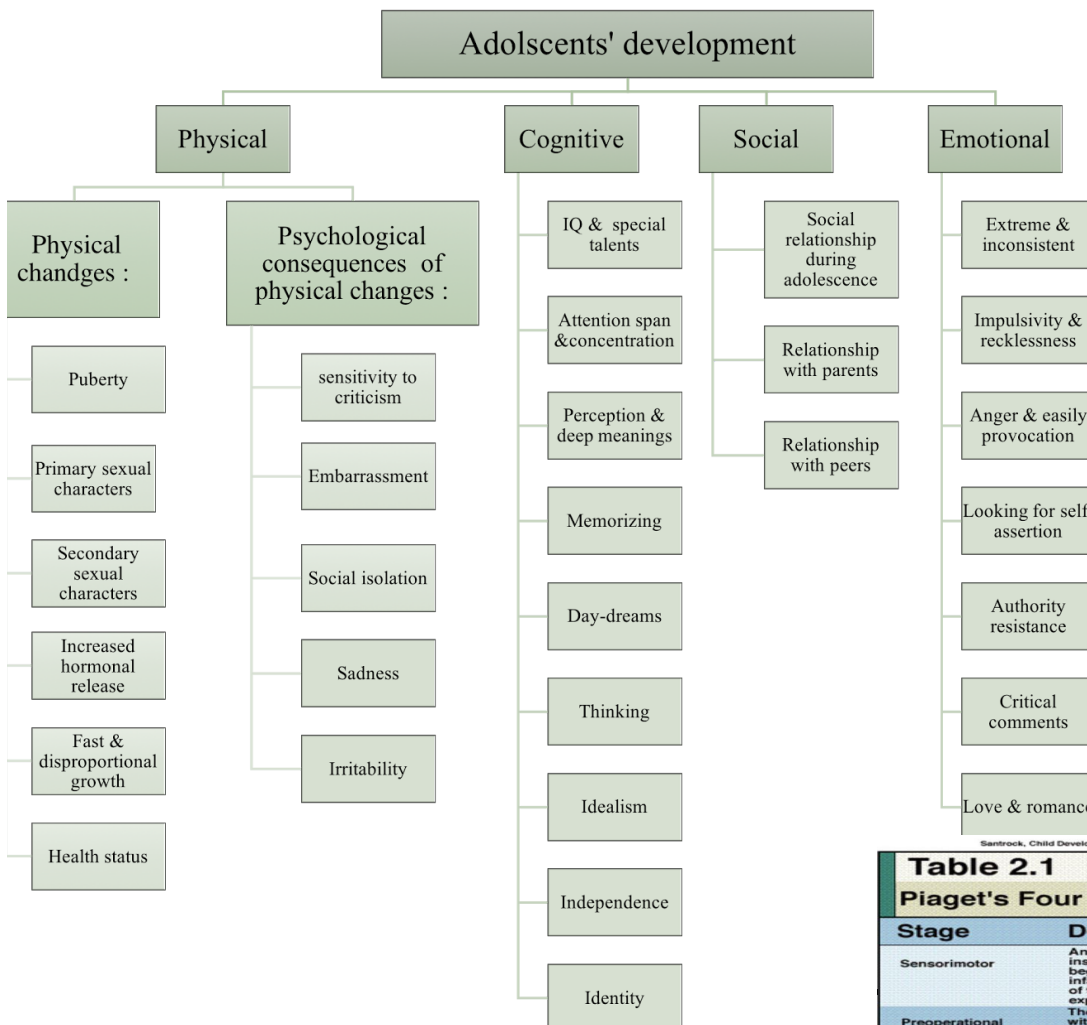
“Does my son have a drug abuse problem?”

Answer: In the context of positive reports about functioning in family, school, extracurricular activities, emotional/social life, Saif likely experiencing normal adolescent development.

In Summary:

- Remember your own teen vulnerabilities—it will enhance your empathy
- Normal adolescent development is usually messy—so you’ll hear about messy behaviors and see them too—even when they are healthy!
- A comprehensive teen, parent, and social system review is the only way to evaluate many of the problems you are consulted about (e.g. drugs, depression, etc).
- Most morbidity and mortality among adolescents has psychosocial/behavioral components, so focusing just on “medical issues” is not an option.
- Because teens are vulnerable, fascinating and challenging, they can be among your most rewarding patients when you connect with them in a genuine way!
- Assess the “big picture” of a teen’s life
- Appreciate that diversity includes many domains
- Find something in the teen to appreciate
- Be curious
- Remember your own vulnerable teen moments
- Be authentic, humble and sincere

Summary :



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| Stage | Description | Age Range |
|----------------------|---|------------------|
| Sensorimotor | An infant progresses from reflexive, instinctual action at birth to the beginning of symbolic thought. The infant constructs an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical actions. | Birth to 2 years |
| Preoperational | The child begins to represent the world with words and images; these words and images reflect increased symbolic thinking and go beyond the connection of sensory information and physical action. | 2 to 7 years |
| Concrete operational | The child can now reason logically about concrete events and classify objects into different sets. | 7 to 11 years |
| Formal operational | The adolescent reasons in more abstract and logical ways. Thought is more idealistic. | 11 to 15 years |