UNIT 3  EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL CHANGES

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3.0  OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- list the various emotional and psychosocial changes that occur during adolescence;
- discuss the various aspects of identity formation, hero worship and peer pressure;
- state the causes and impact of experimentation, mood swings and conflict with adults during adolescence; and
- describe your role as a teacher and parent in helping the adolescent to deal with these changes positively.

3.1  INTRODUCTION

You have just read about the physical and cognitive changes in adolescence. However, during this phase there are many emotional and psychosocial changes too which lead to the development of the personality of the individual. Almost all physical changes may be accompanied by marked mental and psychological changes. Though physical change may be visible, mental and
emotional change takes time to be apparent. It is usually a period of turbulence. Adolescents face ongoing conflict and difficulty adapting to the sudden upsurge of sexual and aggressive drives. These changes cause unrest and confusion in the adolescents’ inner selves and in the way they perceive the world. From an adolescent’s point of view “It is the age at which he is old enough to pay adult prices for the movie but is not allowed to see adult movies.” No longer a child but still not an adult.

3.2 CONCEPT AND MEANING OF PSYCHOSOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL CHANGES

Adolescent maturation is a personal phase of psychological changes and development where children have to establish their identities, own beliefs, values, and what they want to accomplish in life. This self-evaluation process leads to the beginning of long-range goal setting, emotional and social independence, and the making of a mature adult.

The psychological growth during this period results in a variety of types of behaviour. A wide variety of behaviour changes should be considered within the normal realm for adolescents. It may sometimes be difficult to distinguish between normal and abnormal behaviour, and a normal adolescent from a disturbed one.

3.2.1 Psychosoical changes during Adolescence

It is a critical phase and this changes happens in span of three important subphases as discussed below:

a) Early adolescence corresponds to ages 10 to 14 years, when most of them are in middle school. Most are progressing through puberty, intensely aware of physical changes, often leading to many body image issues. They have rapid wide mood swings, become easily upset and emotional, and alternate between extreme cooperation and extreme resistance to adult guidance. They form close friendships with same-sex peers.

b) Middle adolescence, typically ages 15 to 17 years, finds youth continuing education in high school or seeking employment. Puberty usually is complete, and adult size is approaching. Middle adolescents struggle the most with the development of self-identity, and autonomy. Risk-taking behaviour involving driving, substance use, and/or sexual activity may have harmful consequences. Experimentation seems to be a normal part of mid-adolescent development. Sexually, most middle adolescents are now establishing their sexual identity with attraction to the opposite sex, and sometimes, to the same sex. It is a period of immense stress with board exams and career choices. They have a lot of energy which should be channelized in the right direction by giving positive strokes for their psychological and emotional well being.

c) Late adolescence refers to the years in college, from age 17 to 19 years. Most late adolescents are physically adult, accepted as adults in their environments, and are more mature. They become ‘major’ at 18 years and can drive a car and vote. Girls can legally get married. In some states they
can also drink alcohol. They are self-supporting or pursuing educational or vocational training. Their self-identity is established. Late adolescents have a well-established sexual identity, and the ability to have intimate relationships that satisfy the emotional and sexual needs of both partners. Yet some may have not yet reached the level of psychosocial maturity that would facilitate a healthy family life for themselves, or their partners.

**PSYCHOSOCIAL CHANGES IN ADOLESCENCE AND RELATED ISSUES**

- Body image concerns – leading to low self-esteem.
- Need for acceptance in peer group - friendships with same sex and opposite sex.
- Experimentation and risk taking behaviour - smoking, drinking, drug abuse.
- Attraction towards opposite sex – dating, crushes, heartbreaks, infatuation, etc.
- Conflicts with parents and family/elders.
- Establishing identity and wanting independence.
- Clarifying personal value system.
- Setting goals and career planning.
- Antisocial behaviour.
- Media influences.
- Internet – chatting, blogging, facebook, etc.
- Gender discrimination.
- Diet fads.
- Physical, emotional and sexual abuse.
- Bullying - Around 1 in 10 secondary school children is bullied at some point, about 1 in 20 is bullied every week.

**The five Is of psychosocial development are:**

a) **Independence:** Adolescents need to become less dependent on parents. The dependence begins to shift from parents to peers and from existing to new belief systems in order to achieve independence. This shift is strong and may manifest in the form of rebellion against parents and elders or guardians. As they become more independent, young people want to try out new things and experiment, but often recognize that they have little experience to fall back on when things get difficult. This may produce rapid changes in self-confidence and behaviour – feeling very adult one minute, very young and inexperienced the next. In India, girls are usually given less independence than boys leading to a gender discrimination.

b) **Identity:** Adolescents usually look out for a renewed self-image and identity. They search for answers to the questions like: “Who am I? What can I be?” This process involves doubts and experimentation. Identity crisis in
adolescents makes their behaviour difficult to understand. Media becomes a very powerful source of influence in this stage, especially movies and television. These provide adolescents with role models like film heroes, great athletes, etc., whom they try to emulate. Such models help the adolescents realize their fantasies and dreams. Body image becomes a very important concern for the adolescents. Not only body image, its gender identity, professional identity child and adult identity which also brings out many crisis and psychological reaction.

c) **Intimacy and Independency:** They are quite often driven towards search for intimate relationships, with a feeling of love and also a desire to be loved. They make close relationships outside the family, with peers. Relationships within the family also change. The adolescents often get into conflicts with their parents and elders since they want to break away from their control. As the adolescent strive to become independent, he detaches himself from his parents but is yet financially dependent on them. This mixed state of dependency confuses and irritates them. Attraction towards members of the opposite sex is another prominent characteristic of the adolescent. This is natural and occurs mainly because of the sexual maturity taking place among the adolescents. Sex related emotional experiences like ‘crushes’ and ‘infatuation’ also begin to surface during this period. Many girls in India are married in adolescence, and may become mothers. Some adolescents however, face emotional, physical or sexual abuse at this tender age.

d) **Integrity:** Adolescents develop a foundation for sorting out values. Parents provide a base for this. However, there is a tremendous amount of other inputs at this phase - peers, media, school, and society. The adolescents also begin to acquire beliefs, opinions, attitudes and stereotypes about society based upon their own understanding. Adolescents also face an information explosion through TV, magazines, radio and other media. Traditional values learnt at home confront modern values leading to confusion over value system.

e) **Intellect and Idealism:** you have already learnt that the adolescent’s intellectual capacity develops and changes from concrete thinking to abstract thinking. Adolescents become capable of conceptual thinking and understanding logic and deductive reasoning. Some adolescents tend to see things from an idealistic point of view. This involves trying out new experiences, some of which may be risky or even dangerous. Young people can crave excitement in a way that most adults find difficult to understand - and exciting activities may be dangerous. When they do experiment – with drink or drugs or smoking – it is usually with friends.

### 3.2.2 EMOTIONAL CHANGES DURING ADOLESCENCE

All changes in life bring out emotional reactions as all stage of life. While adults are able to cope but adolescents need positive support to cope.

As you have read, the onset of puberty brings physical changes among the adolescents. These changes are often accompanied by emotional reactions. The adolescent is exposed to new social situations, patterns of behaviour and societal expectations which bring a sense of insecurity. It has been found that there is
increase in the incidence of depression. The adolescents show the tendency of impulsive urges to take immediate action which often leads to risk taking behaviour.

Let us list the Emotional Changes during Adolescence as below

- Emotional ability understanding their feelings.
- Impulsiveness
- Preoccupied with body image
- Frequent mood changes and mood swings
- Self-exploration and evaluation of their emotions
- Confused at times
- Poor coping skills – succumb to stress and emotions
- Day dreaming and fantasizing
- Attention-seeking behaviour to feel wanted.

Emotional changes and Problems

During adolescence, the individual faces a wide range and variety of emotions. These include both positive emotions like love, happiness, joy, as well as negative emotions. Like sadness, depression, unhappiness, anxiety. In addition, feelings of anger, rebellion and protest also emerge. Interestingly, emotions of loyalty, patriotism and sacrifice for the nation also develop during adolescence.

Each of the above emotions is felt very intensely. Adolescents tend to express everything in an exaggerated form e.g., “I love cakes”, or “I hate that person”.

Mood swings also occur quite frequently. Sometimes they are happy, sometimes sad. Sometimes they have a high degree of patriotic zeal, but a few minutes later they become disillusioned or angry. This makes their behaviour somewhat unpredictable. You have already learnt earlier that due to rapid physical changes taking place in an adolescent, a conscious and increased interest about one’s own body develops. The body image can bring a sense of fun, pride, shyness or even unhappiness and low self-esteem.

Emotional problems will often affect school work. Pressure to do well and to pass exams may come from parents or teachers, but adolescents usually want to do well and will push themselves. Examination stress is enormous in our country.

The hormonal changes in adolescence lead to heightened emotions. They become more emotional and sensitive. Casual comments by their teachers, friends or family can make them cry or go into fits of anger. They are also impulsive and do not stop to think about the consequences of their actions.

Anxiety may produce phobias and panic attacks. During their adolescence, teenagers may think so little of themselves that life does not seem worth living. They may even attempt suicide. In spite of these powerful feelings, depression may not be obvious to other people.
3.3 ASPECTS OF EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL CHANGES AMONG ADOLESCENT

After reading emotional and psychosocial changes in adolescents. Now let us discuss the other aspects also as follows:

3.3.1 Identity formation

13 year old Rashmi is very confused. Yesterday was her 8 year old brother’s birthday and she was very excited and wanted to join in the party games. Her mother scolded her and said that she was too old for them and instead should help her. Today her mother’s friends came over for a kitty party and Rashmi wanted to sit and listen to the juicy gossip when her mother once again scolded her and said that she was too young to listen to it! Was she young or old – a child or an adult?

This is the dilemma that all adolescents face which leads to the identity crisis “Who am I?” “Where am I going?” “What will I become?”

Identity, or a sense of sameness and continuity, must be searched for. It is a turning point in an adolescent’s life. He wants to become independent but parents are not ready to let go. He finds solace and empathy in his peers which further estranges him from his parents. He becomes touchy and sensitive, and irrationally emotional. He gets confused over his own behaviour, and thus gets an ‘identity crisis’.

Erik Erikson in his theory of personality coined the phrase “identity crisis”. Here identity means the quest for answers to ‘who am I?’ and “where am I going?” – in other words self identity. The word ‘crisis’ means turning point in the life of an individual.

The task confronting adolescents is to consolidate the knowledge learnt about themselves and integrate all these self images to give a new identity. Identity must be acquired through sustained individual effort. The search for an identity involves the establishment of a meaningful self-concept in which past, present, and future are brought together.

Of great concern for many adolescents is the issue of developing a vocational identity, and during the initial attempts some unrealistic choices are not uncommon. Furthermore, goal aspirations are often much higher than warranted by the individual’s perseverance and ability. Frequently, the adolescent is attracted to vocational goals that are attainable by only a very few: models, actors, rock musicians, athletic champions, car racers, astronauts, and other socially glamorized “heroes.” In the process, the adolescents over identify with and idolize their role models and heroes to the extent that they forsake their own identity to imitate the heroes.

At this point, adolescents rarely identify with their parents; on the contrary, they often rebel against parental control, value systems, and intrusions into their private life. This is a necessary part of growing up, since youths must separate their own identity from that of their family and develop autonomy in order to attain maturity.

The adolescent’s search for a personal identity also includes the action of a
personal ideology or a philosophy of life that will give the individual a frame of reference for evaluating events. Such a perspective aids in making choices and guiding behaviour, and in this sense a personal identity based on a philosophy of life may greatly influence the value orientation of the individual.

Finally, the sexual identity is an important aspect of our identity, and this also develops in the adolescent, along with the sexual orientation. A positive outcome of the identity crisis depends on the young person’s willingness to accept his or her own past and establish continuity with previous experiences. The adolescent must develop a commitment to a system of values – religious beliefs, vocational goals, a philosophy of life – and accept his or her sexuality.

The adolescent who fails in the search for an identity will experience self-doubt, and role confusion; such an individual may indulge in a self-destructive one-sided preoccupation. He or she will continue to be morbidly preoccupied with the opinion of others or may turn to the other extreme of no longer caring what others think and withdraw or turn to drugs or alcohol in order to relieve the anxiety. In its most severe form, the clinical picture of identity confusion may lead to suicide or suicide attempts.

Check Your Progress 1

a) Name three emotional changes that occur in adolescence.
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   ................................................................................................................

b) State the five “Is” of psychosocial development in adolescence.
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c) Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:
   i) During adolescence ........................................... are felt very intensely.
   ii) During adolescence there is movement away from parents towards...
   iii) Frequent ................................. lead to the unpredictability of adolescent emotions.
   iv) ..............................crisis is often seen in adolescence.

3.3.2 Influence of peer group: (Social Changes)

Let us read few examples to know about social changes as given below:

Examples: Smita spends her free time talking on her mobile phone with her friends or sending SMS’s to them. Ravi and his friends daily go for tuition together, and study as a group. There is healthy competition between them and they all help each other excel in their studies. Pankaj was the only boy in his group who did not smoke or drink, but last week on his 18th birthday party he was forced to
grow by his friends. Kanchan has a fight everyday with her mother, since she is not allowed to wear short skirts while all her friends do so.

**JOKE**

An 105 year old man was asked by a reporter “What is the best thing about being 105 years old?

The man replied instantly “No peer pressure”.

The term ‘Peer’ stands for persons of the same age and profession as that of the individual. They could be his/her friends, colleagues, or neighbours. The term ‘pressure’ indicates influence or force. Thus the term peer pressure indicates influence of people having similar interest on the individual’s belief, behaviour and attitudes.

Peer pressure is the pressure, stress or strain people feel from friends and classmates to act, behave, think and look a certain way. This kind of pressure can cover everything from fashion to academics, sex and dating. Peer pressure can be either negative, where someone is forced into doing something that they know is negative (e.g., drugs, smoking, or pressure to have sex) or positive – for example, a teen whose friends are all high achievers in school will feel pressure to also be successful. Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes, values, or behaviour in order to conform to group norms. Peer pressure can cause people to do things they would not normally do, e.g., bunk school, eve teasing, take drugs, smoke, get a girlfriend, marry, have a job, etc. Anyone can be affected by peer pressure; however, teens with low-self esteem due to poor emotional / psychological well being are most likely to fall victim to negative peer pressure.

Peer pressure also has positive influences like information sharing, confidence building, emotional sharing and above all identity formation. For example, if one is involved with a group of people that are ambitious and working to succeed, one might feel pressured to follow suit to avoid feeling excluded from the group. Therefore, the youth would be pressured into improving themselves, bettering them in the long run. This is most commonly seen in youths that are active in sports or other extracurricular activities.

Youth peer pressure is one of the most frequently referred to forms of negative peer pressure. It is particularly common because most young people spend large amounts of time in fixed groups (schools and colleges and subgroups within them) regardless of their opinion of those groups. In addition to this, they may lack the maturity and skills to handle pressure from ‘friends’. Nearly eight hours are usually spent communicating with peers, but only eight percent of this time is spent talking to adults. Consequently, conflict between adolescents and their parents increase at this time as adolescents strive to create a separation and sense of independence.

**Tips for adolescents to resist peer pressure when it’s having a negative impact**

- Develop life skills: Assertiveness and negotiation. Even though it’s tough to say “no” they can do it if they believe in themselves.
**Safety in numbers:** It can really make things a lot easier if they have at least one other friend who is on their side.

**Remember that the values** that their parents taught them will make them stronger in handling peer pressure.

**Since it is rather difficult to always say ‘No’ to friends,** try and choose likeminded people as friends.

### 3.3.3 Experimentation: Curiosity and Exploration

Kanha is a 18 year old boy. One day he goes with his friends to a party. His friends all drink beer and dance and have a lot of fun. Kanha does not touch the beer. His friend Chetan drives the car back home. Chetan wants to impress the girls in the car and therefore drives fast and rashly. They crash into a tree. Chetan and Kanha die on the spot while the others have major injuries.

This is unfortunately a reality that the commonest cause of death amongst adolescents is accidents. They love daring feats, speed, excitement and taking risks without thinking about their consequences.

Adolescents are basically fun loving, enthusiastic, energetic, daring, and full of life. They are naturally curious and willing to explore new avenues and experiment in new things – be it dressing styles, new gadgets, new foods, or even drugs, smoking, alcohol or sex.

Adolescence is the age of learning new things and experimentation is a part of learning. This involves trying out new experiments, some of which may be risky and even dangerous. They do this for various reasons:

- To behave like adults
- Because of Peer pressure
- For the sake of curiosity and finding out for themselves.

Therefore, it is important for us to impart education and equip them with the life skills to try out their newly learned abstract thinking like critical thinking and self awareness are all those issues which may affect their lives adversely could be handled in a positive manner.

Adult need to understand that teenagers have not fully developed the ability to evaluate situations and to make accurate judgements about risks. Teens tend to underestimate risks and overestimate their own abilities. As a result, they are often act to accept a dare from a friend that can lead to dangerous risk-taking and illegal or self-destructive behaviour. Some may try feats beyond their physical abilities without full appreciation of the danger. Adults working with this age group should nurture independence and at the same time set boundaries for acceptable behaviour.

Rahul is a 17 year old boy who goes to school. His parents have recently started noticing some changes in him – he has stopped playing football, he comes home late at nights and sleeps all day and often misses school. He is irritable and is constantly asking for money. His mother suspects that he may be stealing money from her purse. His school results are suffering and his

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**Emotional and Psychosocial Changes**

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principal has issued a warning. Ultimately, their parents find out that Rahul is taking drugs. He started experimenting with drugs just for fun. His parents have no money or courage to take their son to a de-addiction center. They are frightened that Rahul will be suspended from school.

In our country the menace of drugs has come to stay. Recent National level data indicates that 3.5 per cent of 15-19 years girls chew and 0.1 per cent smoke tobacco while 28.6 per cent of 15-19 years boys chew and 12.3 per cent smoke tobacco. 11 % of boys of the same age group drink alcohol (NFHS-3). Any person who has ever tried a drug has 80 per cent chances of taking it again. Hence experimentation is not to be allowed since it may lead to addiction.

Shikha and Paras have been going steady for two years. One evening Paras invites Shikha to his home since his parents were going out and they could be alone. She agrees, but later repents since Paras takes advantage of their privacy and forces her into a physical relationship.

During adolescence individuals feel attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is a normal process of growing up. However, all attraction cannot be categorized as sexual attraction. In the age of adolescence, a boy or girl may like to talk to each other, praise their intellect and beauty, share their books and notes – all these are simply a likeness and friendship. In addition, at this age young people witness change in their body resulting into some behavioural change and that raises their curiosity to know the opposite sex. About one in five males and about one in twenty females have engaged in sex before marriage. For some adolescents, curiosity about sex leads them to commercial sex workers. Often they are incidences of unprotected sex, leading to unwanted teenage pregnancies, illegal abortions, STIs and HIV/AIDS. In some cases, there may be attraction to the same sex.

Adults should therefore encourage the enthusiasm and curiosity of their adolescent while maintaining strict limits which should not be crossed.

3.3.4 Conflicts with family/elders over control

Prabha has locked herself in her room for two days and refuses to come out and talk to her parents. Her mother did not allow her to attend the class farewell party since it involved staying out late at night. Gagan has a passion for dancing and acting and wants to pursue it as a career. His father wants him to become a doctor and look after the big nursing home he owns. Everyday they have arguments over this issue and Gagan is very frustrated and upset and wants to run away from home.

The early years of adolescence are associated with transformations in family relationships and with the emergence of conflict between young adolescents and their parents. Research indicates that parent-adolescent conflict increases during the middle school years and involves the everyday events of family life. While growing up the adolescents want to act like adults and take independent decisions. In such a process the moral values, attitudes, and religious beliefs are often questioned and they form their own opinions that may be radically different from those of parents and elders.

When communication starts breaking down, emotional tension increases. Communication becomes more difficult and conflict can spin out of control. Parents
and their teens both share frustration, stress, time pressures, disappointment, financial stress, and fear of failure. They both want the best for each other. How they deal with these feelings and desires can create disconnects, or can also be a basis for managing conflict constructively.

Underlying all constructive conflict management is understanding and feeling that you are understood. Knowing that you are understood creates respect for you and your position. Understanding a situation from the other’s perspective creates an environment that fosters formulation of mutually beneficial solutions. Stephen Covey says it best. “Seek first to understand. Then be understood”. This is much easier said than done.

As adults we should respect the adolescents and build confidence in them having regular talk with them. That will build their skills to convey their opinion in a more flexible, respectful manner with the elders.

3.3.5 Mood Fluctuation

According to G. Stanley Hall adolescence is a period of “storm and stress.” this period of time would be marked by turmoil, turbulence, and frustrated idealism, regardless of environmental factors. On the other hand, social anthropologist Margaret Mead did studies that showed that cultural, spiritual, and familial factors played a role in whether or not a teenager ever experienced mood swings, and that different cultures had different experiences. Most researchers agree that it is a combination of biological and emotional factors that affect a teenager’s mood.

Let us read about the factors which leads to mood fluctuation

Biological Factors

The brain reaches 90% of its full size by the age of six. Recently researchers have discovered that the brain continues to grow and develop through adolescence much more than originally thought. The last to develop is the area of the brain responsible for judgement, self-control, and planning. This means that while teenagers have very strong emotions and passions, they don’t have the mechanisms in place to control these emotions. This is one reason behind teenage mood swings.

Another biological factor is that this is when the body starts producing sex hormones as well as going through a major growth spurt. The physical changes that teens experience cause them to feel strange and perhaps confused or uncomfortable, and this erodes their sense of security. Because of the effect that this has on their psychological state, they may strike out or experience conflicting
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moods. **Pre menstrual mood swings** are common in girls due to the changing hormones.

**Emotional Factors**

Teenagers have not yet developed the ability to deal with the pressures, frustrations, and anxieties of life. As their lives become more complicated and adult-like, they don’t have the built-in **coping mechanisms** that adults have developed to help them deal, so they are prone to react very emotionally to situations. Also, teenagers are typically very preoccupied with **identity formations** and becoming entities with lives separate from those of their parents. This, again, can cause confusion or frustration.

Mood swings can leave a teenager feel like they’re **out of control**, which is a very uncomfortable state for anyone to be in. Of course, if the mood swings are severely abnormal or prolonged the teen should see a professional about other possible issues. In India, as many as 12.8% adolescents suffer from **mental health disorders**, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research. Of these, about 3 – 4% are clinically depressed. During adolescence, girls are twice as likely as boys to develop **depression** as they undergo far more hormonal change and feel **gender related discrimination** at the age of adolescence.

Normal teenage mood swings can make a teenager feel unbalanced, though, and are not to be taken lightly. Here are some tips for what your teen can do when dealing with a mood swing:

- **Talking to a friend** or peer who is dealing with the same issues will make them feel less abnormal and help them realize that they are not crazy.

- **Take a breather**: Stepping back and trying to look at the situation from another angle, counting to ten, or just sitting with the uncomfortable feelings for a moment will help the teen to realize that it’s not as bad as it seems.

- **Exercise**: Exercise releases endorphins into the blood stream, and these chemicals can help to regulate mood and ease frustration.

- **Get plenty of rest**: Regular sleep helps keep the mind in tip-top shape.

- **Get creative**: Painting, drawing, writing, or building something can help a teen to express their emotions in a healthy way.

- **Wait**: The mood may pass as quickly as it struck; wait before acting out on extreme emotions. It won’t last forever.

Mood swings can be very difficult to deal with. However, your teenager needs your **support** more than ever when they are feel low, self-conscious and embarrassed. Focus on what you love in him, show that you appreciate him and keep in mind that this is just a stage. It will pass.
3.3.6 Role Model (Hero worship)

Sunanda’s room is very colourful. Every inch of her wall is covered with posters and pictures of her role model Aishwarya Rai. She does not miss any of her movies or shows and all her dresses are based on her icon’s style.

Activity

Reflect back on your adolescence.

Who was your role model? Why did you choose him / her?

Do you now think that s/he was appropriate?

Around mid adolescence, while developing their own identity, the adolescent looks around in search of their ideal in the form of a role model. This model may be from any sphere of their life – parents, family, friends, celebrities, community, society, national or international. Role models have an important role to play in the psychological development of the adolescent.

Children, especially during adolescence – their most vulnerable and impressionable age are in need of role models, and take them from all areas that are close at hand, whether mass media, parents and family, or their teachers.

Many teens choose models for themselves who they see as having particular characteristics that they — the teens — are lacking. For example, a teen who perceives herself as unattractive may choose a supermodel as a role model. In the event that a parent feels there is something wrong with the role model their child has chosen, the parent needs to try to figure out what the teen is trying to compensate for by choosing that model, then address that issue directly with the teen.

While teenagers often choose role models because they truly want to be like those they’ve chosen, sometimes role models are selected as a means of defiance. “My son knows I can’t stand this one rock star that all the kids seem to be listening to these days,” says a mother of a teen. “I think he put up the posters and bought the CD’s just to aggravate me.”

Whatever the reasoning may be for a child choosing a particular role model, parents may be faced with an uphill battle if they don’t like what they see. “Television and media make it really hard to parent,” says a mother of three teenagers. “I want certain standards in my family, and pressure from TV and peer pressure work against me sometimes.

It is possible for the media to have less effect on teens than parents may fear. If a young person has emotional / psychological security as well as open lines of communication with parents, the actual influence is minimal. However, besides celebrities in the media, most adolescents in India have their teachers, extended family or prominent history characters as their role models. Of course an understanding and empathetic parent would be the ideal role model.

Role models are likely to change as the adolescent keeps ‘finding’ himself and developing his own identify and personality.
The given table will enable you to have a quick glance on the stages of adolescent development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGES OF HEALTHY ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>Early Adolescence (ages 10-14 years)</th>
<th>Middle Adolescence (ages 14-17)</th>
<th>Late Adolescence (ages 17-19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic Development Milestones and Tasks</td>
<td>* Puberty: Rapid growth period * Secondary sexual characteristics appear</td>
<td>* Secondary sexual characteristics advanced * 95% of adult height reached</td>
<td>* Physical maturity and productive growth levelling off and ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Growth</td>
<td>* Concrete thought dominates here and now. * Cause-effect relationships underdeveloped * Stronger self than social awareness</td>
<td>* Growth in abstract thought; reverts to concrete thought under stress * Cause-effect relationships better understood * Very self-absorbed</td>
<td>* Abstract thought established * Future oriented; able to understand, plan and pursue long range goals * Philosophical and idealistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual/ Cognition</td>
<td>* Experimentation, sex, drug, friends, jobs, risk-taking behaviour * Career planning * Attraction to opposite sex</td>
<td>* Strong peer alliances, fad behaviours * Sexual drives emerge and teens begin to explore ability to date and attract a partner</td>
<td>* Pursue realistic vocational goals with training or employment * Relate to family as adult * Realizations of own limitations * Establishment of sexual identity, sexual activity is more common * Establishment of ethical and moral values system * More capable of intimate, complex Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Development</td>
<td>* Am I normal? * Daydreaming * Vocational goals change frequently * Begin to develop own value system * Emerging sexual feeling and sexual exploration * Desire of privacy * Magnify own problems – no one understand me!</td>
<td>* Conflict with family predominates due to ambivalence about emerging independence</td>
<td>* Decisions/values less influenced by peers * Relates to individuals more than to peer group * Selection of partner based on individual Preference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group</td>
<td>* Intense friendship with same sex * Contact with opposite sex in groups</td>
<td>* Strong peer alliances, fad behaviours * Sexual drives emerge and teens begin to explore ability to date and attract a partner</td>
<td>* Emancipation: - vocational/technical/college and/or work - adult lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>* Challenge authority, family; anti parent * Loneliness * Wide mood swings * Argumentative and disobedient</td>
<td>* Conflict with family predominates due to ambivalence about emerging independence</td>
<td>* Decisions/values less influenced by peers * Relates to individuals more than to peer group * Selection of partner based on individual Preference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Image</td>
<td>* Preoccupation with physical changes and critical of appearance * Anxieties about secondary sexual characteristic changes * Peers used as a standard for normal appearance</td>
<td>* Less concern about physical changes but increased interest in personal attractiveness * Excessive physical activity alternating with lethargy</td>
<td>* Usually comfortable with body image</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Check Your Progress 2

a) List three ways in which an adolescent can handle his / her mood swings.

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................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................

b) List three negative impacts of risk taking behaviour during adolescence.

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................................................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................

c) Fill in the blanks:

i) Peer pressure can be ................ or .................

ii) Mood swings are due to ................ and ................. factors.

ii) An understanding and empathetic ................ would be the ideal role model.

iv) Curiosity and exploration lead to ................ in adolescence.

3.4 ROLE OF TEACHERS

As a teacher, you have a pivotal role in the psychosocial and emotional development of the adolescents. The teacher is often a role model for the adolescent and therefore you can counsel and guide your students through their difficult times. Starting from issues of growing up to choosing a career the student is more likely to listen to a teacher than a parent.

Correct information is important for holistic development, and you are the best person to provide reliable information.

With information, attitude and skill development are also essential. These can be imparted through life skill sessions in the classrooms which are both fun and educational. The aim of school-based interventions is to create an environment that will strengthen children’s coping abilities and allow them to counter the environmental stresses and disadvantages they face.

Your support is important throughout the school life and often, old students will come back to you for advice. The adolescent also requires a safe environment with no risk of bullying or abuse.

Adolescents need to be shown limits so that they do not indulge in risky activities, and so discipline is important. This should be positive and not in the form of punishments.

Adolescents require appreciation and encouragement to motivate them to excel in curricular and co-curricular activities. A non-judgmental attitude is extremely important.
Teach them life-skills like coping with emotion and managing the stress, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Finally, all students need to be loved for what they are, with their strengths and weaknesses. This is one of the biggest gifts you can give your students.

SWEAT

S  =  Support and empathetic attitudes
W  =  Watchful observation and guidance
E  =  Education and information
A  =  Appreciation and encouragement
T  =  Time and trust

Adolescence is thus a turning point in one’s life, a period of increased potential but also increased vulnerability which, in the absence of a support system and appropriate life skills, may lead to substance abuse and mental health problems.

Society bears a moral responsibility to help their adolescents for which we have to work hard and SWEAT.

3.5 ROLE OF PARENTS

Let us discuss the Role of Parents during adolescence related to emotional and psychosocial changes to help adolescence to adjust well.

a) Parent’s interest and help: The willingness of parents to take interest in their adolescent’s activities and support him are very important. A positive attitude can go a long way.

b) Listening, understanding and talking: Adolescents respect understanding and empathetic parents who communicate openly with them. Lack of communication widens the ‘generation gap’. By developing open, honest and ongoing communication about responsibility, sex, and choice, parents can help their youngsters learn about sex in a healthy and positive manner. It is important to talk about the responsibilities and consequences that come with growing up. Helping children understand that these are decisions that require maturity and responsibility will increase the chance that they make good choices.

c) Love and acceptance: Unconditional love and acceptance allow the adolescent to grow securely and be allowed to make a few mistakes.

d) Trust: Adolescents feel respected and loved when their parents trust them. A non-judgmental and non-critical atmosphere at home should be maintained.

e) Autonomy: A balance of independence and discipline is what most adolescents expect from their parents.

f) The magic of touch: Touch gives a sense of security to the adolescent. It could be a pat on the back, a soft touch, facial expressions, words of appreciation or loving words over the telephone – all show the parent’s concern and affection for his teenage child.
Though parents are often at a loss as to how to relate to their adolescents they nevertheless want to continue to be involved in their adolescents’ lives. The heart of successful parenting of adolescents is the relationship that we form with them. Building a relationship of **mutual respect, love and understanding, providing support and consistency** are the foundations of effective parenting.

You may wonder if any of your guidance is sinking in, but young people listen and absorb more than you think. They are likely to apply your viewpoint to their own friends and social situations. Young people consistently say that their parents are the most important influence in their lives.

### 3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt the physical, cognitive, emotional and psychosocial changes in adolescence. Further you have read the aspects of all these changes among adolescence. Now you be able to identify the causes of peer influence and experimentation and in later section of unit, has describe your role as teacher which will further guide you to handle adolescents.

### 3.7 KEY WORDS

**Psycho social**: Psychosocial refers to one’s psychological development in and interaction with a social environment. It was first commonly used by psychologist Erik Erikson in his stages of social development.

**Sexual identity**: refers to an individual’s conception of their own sexuality, and decides their sexual behaviour. Individuals may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviours.

**Sexual orientation**: is used to describe a pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions, fantasies, attachments and longings to men, women, or both. Sexual orientation is not a choice; that is, individuals do not choose to be homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual but are born like this. It is usually classified relative to the gender of the people who are found sexually attractive.

**Autonomy**: refers to becoming independent and is the capacity of a rational individual to make an informed, un-coerced decision.

### 3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress 1

a) **Three emotional changes are:**

   i) Mood swings

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**Emotional and Psychosocial Changes**

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**Psycho social**

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**Sexual identity**

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**Sexual orientation**

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**Autonomy**
Growth and Development During Adolescence

ii) Impulsiveness
iii) Day dreaming

b) The five Is are
i) Independence
ii) Identity
iii) Intimacy
iv) Integrity
v) Intellect

c) i) emotions
   ii) peers
   iii) mood swings
   iv) identity

Check Your Progress 2
a) i) Talking to a friend or peer
   ii) Exercise
   iii) Creativity
b) i) Accidents
   ii) Substance abuse
   iii) HIV / AIDS

c) i) positive; negative
   ii) Biological; emotional
   iii) Parent
   iv) Experimentation

3.9 REFERENCES

Web resources:
- www.teenagerstoday.com
- www.natefacs.org
- www.thehealthcenter.info/teen-mood-swings
- www.infed.org
- www.nos.org
- www.nacoonline.org
- www.wikipedia.com
Books:

- *Developing Adolescents: A Reference for Professionals* by American Psychological Association.
- *Course Manual for Adolescent Health by IAP – ITPAH* (Indian Academy of Paediatrics International Training Programme on Adolescent Health)
- *Textbook of Medical Physiology* – Guyton and Hall
- *Adolescent Education Program: Life Skills Development* by NACO
- *Nobody Understands Me!* by Dr. S. Yamuna