



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1991 Volume V: Adolescence/Adolescents' Health

Dysfunctional Adolescent Behavior

Guide for Curriculum Unit 91.05.09
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Adolescents face a myriad of problems. Their responses to them, the degree to which those responses are successful, contribute to their development into well-rounded adults. The interactions between adolescents and these problems also contribute to some of the mystiques, and intrigue that surrounds adolescents. Mood swings, struggles to solve problems and striving to be accepted mark the adolescents' attempts to become stable. One means of enhancing their strength and stability is to educate adolescents about the inevitable changes that will take place in their lives as they develop and grow into adulthood.

Adolescence is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, during which the child changes physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially, and also forms a mature identity in preparation for living as an independent adult. The changes of adolescence are normal and absolutely necessary in each person's life; however, they cause an upheaval in the child's life and those around them. The upheaval is due partly to the adolescent wanting to be part of both worlds that of the dependency of being a child and the freedom of being an adult. While the child is going through the tumultuous period and is beginning to adjust to the personal changes, there must be a clear upset in the former equilibrium in order to ensure proper growth and development.

Adolescence is divided into three stages. The early adolescence stage (10-14 years) is associated with great physical changes as the child enters puberty and becomes capable of reproduction. The slowing down of physical changes brings on the middle adolescence stage (15-17 years) in which the bulk of mental maturation occurs. Late adolescence (17 years and up) highlights psycho-social development, emotional maturation and refining of social interactions. Young people mature at different rates, girls tend to develop earlier than boys.

The topics that will be addressed in this unit are: growth and development, sexuality, nutrition and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This unit will be taught for two weeks in grades 7 and 8. Included in this unit are: vocabulary words, lesson plans, visual aids, resources, teacher-and-student reading list, and bibliography.

(Recommended for Science, Health and Physical Education, grades 6-10)

Key Words

Adolescence American Nutrition Physiological Development

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