Chapter 3: Adolescence — changes and challenges

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Chapter 3: Adolescence — changes and challenges

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of rapid growth and change. The range of changes and when they occur will differ from person to person. Each person will also deal with these changes quite differently and learn to adjust to their changing bodies, emerging needs and new roles and responsibilities in their own way. An increased need for independence and responsibility is a key element of adolescence. Support from families, communities, schools, peers and health services will help adolescents learn skills that can help them make a successful transition from childhood to adulthood.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What are the changes and challenges that occur as you reach puberty and the stage of adolescence? What are some effective strategies to help you navigate a pathway through this time of change?

STARTER QUESTIONS

1. What are the physical, social and emotional changes that occur in boys and girls in adolescence?
2. How do physical changes affect your sense of identity?
3. How does your brain develop during puberty and adolescence?
4. What are some strategies for coping with strong emotions?

5. What are some ways to deal with loss and grief?

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**INQUIRY SEQUENCE**

3.1 From birth to adolescence

3.2 Puberty — the physical changes

3.3 Adolescence — the social, emotional and sexual developments

3.4 Sexual health

3.5 Sexual choices and their consequences: contraception

3.6 Sexual choices and their consequences: STIs

3.7 Surviving puberty

3.8 The challenges of adolescence

3.9 Dealing with loss and grief

Review

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**3.1 From birth to adolescence**

You are growing and changing by the day. From the time of birth and through adolescence you will be acquiring new physical abilities, developing thinking skills and learning emotional regulation, as well as social growth. Substantial physical (e.g. learning to walk and becoming taller), social (e.g. family and school friends), emotional (e.g. tantrums and negotiations) and intellectual (e.g. learning about the alphabet and Pythagoras) developments have occurred in a relatively short period of time. The changes that occur from infancy through to adolescence are vast and quite profound.
ENGAGE

You grow and change day by day. From infancy, to toddler, to preschool age, to primary school, to secondary school (adolescence), many changes have already taken place.

EXPLORE

Growth from infancy to adulthood

We begin our life journey when a sperm from our father unites with an egg from our mother. This cell then rapidly divides into more and more cells and eventually forms a human foetus. Our mother provides both a safe environment within her uterus and the nutrients we need to grow during the nine months of pregnancy.

After birth, babies grow at a very fast rate. They need to be cared for and nurtured and are totally dependent on someone else for their survival. As babies grow into toddlers, they develop skills such as crawling, walking, speech and finer hand manipulation of objects. There is constant input of information from the world around them that stimulates their growth and development.
HEALTH FACT

The number of bones in our bodies varies over our lifespan. When we are born, we have about 300 bones, but as we grow, many bones in the lower vertebral column and pelvic region fuse into solid structures. On average, adults end up with about 206 bones.

It is not until puberty that obvious male and female characteristics become evident. This is a time of rapid growth — physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially.

As young adults, our bodies stop growing between the ages 18 and 25; however, the brain may take until 23 years of age to fully develop. Our ability to solve problems, organise, make decisions and positively deal with our emotions continues to improve. We become more independent in many ways — moving away from our parents, earning a living, starting a career and developing new interests.

As adults, we are almost completely independent. This is usually the time when we start our own family. As we move to old age we may need the help of family and friends to care for us and thus the cycle of life ends with dependence on others.

Adolescence

Adolescence is the time during which we mature from childhood to adulthood. This is a time of significant physical, emotional and social change. The beginning of adolescence is signalled by the onset of puberty.
Adolescence is the time during which we mature from childhood to adulthood.

**Growth and development milestones**

Growth and development is a lifelong process of physical, cognitive/intellectual and social/emotional change. Enormous changes take place from infancy through to adolescence and adulthood.

The following developmental milestones occur in most young people at each stage of their lives. However, each child may reach each stage of development at different times to other children.

**Table 3.1: Developmental milestones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of life</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Cognitive/intellectual</th>
<th>Social/emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Infancy (0–3 years) | Double in height  
Triple in weight  
Develop teeth and the ability to eat solid foods  
Develop 75 per cent of their brain capacity  
Learn to crawl and walk | Learn language and communication skills  
Develop an imagination  
Understand the world primarily through their family | Develop trust for caregivers  
Have relationships primarily with family members  
Kiss and hug to show love and hit to show anger |
| Preschool (4–5 years) | Grow at a slower rate than during infancy and the toddler years  
Reach 50 per cent of their adult height and | Begin to experience the world through exploration | Still rely on caregivers but no longer need or want as much physical contact with caregivers as they |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of life</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Cognitive/intellectual</th>
<th>Social/emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about 20 per cent of their adult weight by age five</td>
<td>Begin separation from family caregivers and more independence</td>
<td>received in infancy and as toddlers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop more coordinated large motor skills, enabling them to skip, run and jump</td>
<td>Understand what is good and bad and be able to follow rules</td>
<td>Continue to express emotions physically and to seek hugs and kisses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop fine motor skills, enabling them to tie shoelaces and draw recognisable figures</td>
<td></td>
<td>Socialise with peers as friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete 90 per cent of brain development by age five</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower primary school (6–8 years)</td>
<td>Experience slower growth of about 6 cm in height and 3.5 kg per year</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grow longer legs relative to their total height</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop less fat and grow more muscle than in earlier years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in strength</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lose their baby teeth and begin to grow adult teeth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper primary school (9–12 years)</td>
<td>Experience a growth spurt with significant weight gain, muscle growth and genital maturation (growth spurt</td>
<td>Become more independent as they move into secondary school</td>
<td>Feel self-conscious about outward appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider peers more important than family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage of life</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Cognitive/intellectual</td>
<td>Social/emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begins earlier for girls; lasts longer for boys) Enter puberty; this usually begins earlier in girls (nine to 12) than in boys (11 to 14)</td>
<td>Shift their school focus from play-centred activities to academic study Look to peers and media for information and advice Develop increasing capability for social conscience and for abstract thought, including understanding complex issues such as poverty and war Take on increased responsibility, such as family jobs and babysitting</td>
<td>May develop sexual feelings for others as a new dimension within relationships Develop the capacity to understand the components of a caring, loving relationship Experience feelings of insecurity and begin to doubt self-concept and previous self-confidence Struggle with family relationships and desire privacy and separation from family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During puberty: • Hair grows under arms and on pubis and, in males, on face and chest. • Body proportions change (hips widen in females, shoulders broaden in males) • In males, genitals mature, voice deepens, and erections, ejaculation and wet dreams are more frequent. • In females, genitals mature, breasts develop, and ovulation and menstrual cycle begin.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens/adolescence (13–17 years) Complete puberty and the physical transition from childhood to adulthood Reach nearly their adult height, especially females (males continue to grow taller into their early twenties)</td>
<td>Attain cognitive maturity — the ability to make decisions based on knowledge of options and their consequences Continue to be influenced by peers (the power of peer pressure lessens after early adolescence)</td>
<td>Have the capacity to develop long-lasting, mutual and healthy relationships Understand their own feelings and have the ability to analyse why they feel a certain way Begin to place less value on appearance and more on personality</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Puberty — a time of change

Puberty is a time of many changes. Some of these changes are exciting, others are daunting. Your body begins to develop and change during this time and your body will grow faster than at any other time in your life, except for when you were an infant.

Puberty is triggered by a change in hormone levels in our bodies and is a time during which our bodies change physically. Our reproductive organs mature so our bodies become capable of procreating — that is, having babies.

Puberty begins at about 10 years of age but, because the changes that occur at the beginning of puberty happen inside us, we can’t tell. It is not until we see the outward physical changes that we can tell puberty has begun. These outward changes usually occur at about 11–14 years of age for girls and 13–16 years of age for boys.

### Hormones and puberty

Hormones play a large role during puberty. They are the cause of many of the body’s physical changes during this time. They are released by the pituitary gland which is located in the brain. During puberty, it releases increased amounts of growth hormone, which causes a rapid growth spurt. This growth spurt usually occurs earlier among girls. Together with a rapid growth in height, body parts such as the hands, feet and head mature to their full adult size. Internal organs also grow in size during puberty — for example, the heart and lungs increase in size. This accounts for our increased physical capacity for endurance and strength as we mature to adults.

The pituitary gland triggers the secretion of the female reproductive hormone, oestrogen, and the male reproductive hormone, testosterone. Oestrogen is secreted by the ovaries in girls and testosterone is secreted by the testes in boys.

Sexual development occurs during puberty. Both boys and girls experience enlargement and maturity of their primary sex organs. For boys, this means their penis and testes grow bigger and...
their testes start to produce sperm. Girls start to release mature ova (eggs) from their ovaries. The production of sperm in boys and mature ova in girls is referred to as a primary sex characteristic.

The release of the female and male reproductive hormones in greater amounts during puberty leads to the development of secondary sex characteristics, as shown in table 3.2.

Am I normal?

Changes that will happen to you during puberty happen to everyone. The timing of these changes is different for each individual so it is important not to be concerned if the onset of puberty for you occurs later or earlier than your friends. Not only is there great variability with regards to the timing of the onset of puberty among your peers, the speed of the changes that occur and the length of time puberty takes to complete will also differ greatly. This is another factor that contributes to your uniqueness as an individual. The experience of puberty results in a changing body that may feel a little out of control. Some of the changes may be a little uncomfortable to deal with at first and may take some time to adjust to, however they will become a normal part of your life and you will be better able to cope with them with time. The important thing to remember is that puberty doesn’t last forever.

HEALTH FACT

The growth spurt during adolescence occurs at different rates in different parts of the body — for example, hands and feet grow faster than arms and legs, and arms and legs lengthen before the torso. This explains the feeling of ‘gawkiness’ that some adolescents experience.

Secondary sex characteristics

The visible and more noticeable changes that occur during puberty are known as the secondary sex characteristics. They are considered secondary because they occur only after the release of hormones.

Table 3.2: Secondary sex characteristics that develop at puberty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testes and scrotum grow.</td>
<td>Breasts grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pubic hair develops.</td>
<td>Pubic hair develops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The body grows taller.</td>
<td>The body grows taller and curvier, and the hips widen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair develops under the arms and on the face, body, arms and legs.</td>
<td>Hair develops under the arms and on the arms and legs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil glands in the skin produce more oil, which can lead to pimples and acne.</td>
<td>Oil glands in the skin produce more oil, which can lead to pimples and acne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The penis grows.</td>
<td>Menstruation begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweat production increases.</td>
<td>Sweat production increases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle growth occurs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The voice deepens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Physical development from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood
ACTIVITIES

1 Growing and changing word cloud

Use the Wordle and WordItOut weblinks in your Resources section to create a word cloud that shows what changes have occurred in your development from infancy until now.

Type in all of the words that you can think of and remember to type the words that you believe are the most important a number of times so that they are created the boldest and largest.

2 Am I normal?

Using the Completely Gorgeous weblink in your Resources section, open the ‘What is normal?’ section.

Read the Girly Bits and Penis Magazine and discuss (in pairs) your understanding of ‘what is normal?’ Develop a whole class understanding.

3 Anonymous message — growing up …

At the top of one A4 piece of paper your teacher will write the following sentence stem:

- The best part about growing up is …

At the top of another A4 piece of paper your teacher will write the following sentence stem:

- The hardest part about growing up is …

The paper will be folded so that the sentence stems are always visible to students. Pass each piece of paper around the class so every student can write their own ending to the sentence. Fold the paper after you write your comment so that the comments remain anonymous. The teacher can then read out some of the responses and start a whole class discussion.

CHECK & CHALLENGE

Explain

1. Which hormone causes growth spurts?
2. Describe the differences between the baby and toddler stages in the human life cycle.

**Evaluate**

3. Do our bodies and brain develop fully at the same time? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Do girls and boys grow at the same rate? Give reasons for your answer.

**Explain**

5. What are the secondary sex characteristics of boys and girls?

**Elaborate**


**Explain**

7. Identify the major hormones released during puberty and the effects they have on the body.
8. Explain why it is important not to compare yourself to others in relation to your growth and development during puberty.

### 3.2 Puberty — the physical changes

Puberty is a time of many physical changes. It is the period during which you undergo sexual maturation. Puberty can also affect your social and emotional development, but the physical changes are generally identified first in relation to puberty. You will undergo growth surges that make you taller, and your muscles will change shape and make you stronger. The other physical changes that take place are quite different for boys and girls. It is important that girls learn about the changes boys go through and boys also learn about the changes that girls go through.

**ENGAGE**

You are now familiar with some of the physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty. The physical changes are the visible and more noticeable changes; however, there are also some physical changes that are not so noticeable. This section will take a closer look at the physical changes that occur in both boys and girls. You may find it a little

**Weblinks**

- Changes during puberty
- Puberty for girls
embarrassing to speak to anyone about the physical changes that are happening to you. It is always important to remind yourself that everyone goes through puberty and that it is just a part of your growth and development. It is also important to be aware of the many resources that you can access to understand what is happening to you.

EXPLORER

Puberty and girls

Puberty usually occurs in girls between the ages of 10 and 14, but may occur as early as 8 years of age. Generally, the first sign of puberty for girls is the development of breast tissue, however it may also be the growth of pubic hair. Breast development will start with small, firm and relatively tender lumps under one or both nipples and then the whole breast will start to get bigger. Coarse and curly hair (pubic hair) will start to grow on the vagina and underarms and a girl's body will start to become curvier as her hips start to widen. The arrival of a girl's first period (menstruation) is another sign that a female has begun puberty and can be the most difficult and challenging of times. It is the time that signifies a girl's ability to reproduce; however, sometimes ovulation can happen just before a girl has her first period so it is important to be aware that it is possible for a girl to become pregnant prior to her first period.

Menstruation

Menstruation is also known as a girl's period. Girls start to menstruate (or get their periods) during puberty. It usually happens around 12 months after the first physical signs of puberty but because puberty starts at a different time for each of us, the age at which a girl gets her period will vary. It will generally occur anywhere between the ages of 9–16 years of age.

The menstrual cycle

A menstrual cycle is about 28 days in length, although the length of a cycle is different for each girl. It is controlled by the release of different hormones that regulate what happens in the cycle. The first day of a girl's period signals the start of her menstrual cycle. A 'period' is the shedding of the uterus lining, which is called the endometrium. The lining comes out as fluid through the vagina. This fluid is comprised of the lining of the uterus wall, blood and the unfertilised egg. Once the period is finished — that is, the bleeding stops — hormones direct the body to start building up the endometrium again. The endometrium builds up or thickens to house the egg if it is fertilised by a male's sperm.
A period usually lasts 3–7 days. Bleeding is usually the heaviest in the first few days. The length and heaviness of a period are different for each girl. Periods are irregular for most girls in the first year or two, but then settle into a fairly regular cycle. Some girls may experience abdominal pain and/or backache when they get their period or in the few days before, while others may experience only minor discomfort.

Hormones and the menstrual cycle

The menstrual cycle is controlled by the release of different types of hormones. Each hormone has a specific role to play. The menstrual cycle has four phases.

1. The menstruation phase
2. The follicular phase
3. The ovulation phase
4. The luteal phase
During the menstrual phase, the thickened lining of the uterus (endometrium), blood and the unfertilised egg flow from the uterus and out through the vagina. This phase is commonly referred to as a period.

HEALTH FACT

Many girls use sanitary pads when they first get their period, and try tampons later, but it is a personal preference and choice. You should carry a pad in your bag just in case your period starts at school. The introduction of tampons has assisted females in leading a normal and active lifestyle even when having their period, allowing them to participate in activities such as swimming.

The follicular phase is the time between the first day of menstruation (period) and when ovulation occurs. During this phase, the pituitary gland releases follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH). This hormone stimulates the ovary to produce a number of follicles (approximately 5–20). In most cases, only one of these follicles will mature into an egg. Also at this time, the lining of the uterus begins to thicken again in preparation for possible fertilisation of an ovum and the resulting pregnancy. There is also a rise in levels of the female sex hormone oestrogen.

The ovulation phase occurs when the mature egg is released from the follicle on the surface of the ovary. Ovulation usually occurs in the middle of the menstrual cycle — that is, about day 14 of a 28-day menstrual cycle. As oestrogen levels rise during the follicular phase, the brain triggers the release of gonadotropin-releasing hormones (GnRH). This hormone prompts the pituitary gland to produce higher levels of luteinising hormone (LH) and FSH. Ovulation is triggered by high levels of LH. The egg moves from the follicle on the surface of the ovary down through the fallopian tube to the uterus. The life span of the egg is around 24 hours and unless it meets a sperm during this time, it will die.

The luteal phase is approximately two weeks in length. During this time, the ruptured follicle on the surface of the ovary changes into a structure called the corpus luteum. The corpus luteum starts to release the sex hormone progesterone and small amounts of oestrogen. These two hormones maintain the thickened lining of the uterus. If the ovum is not fertilised by sperm to create a pregnancy, the corpus luteum will die. This occurs around day 22 of a 28-day cycle. This causes the levels of progesterone and oestrogen to fall and the lining of the uterus to come away and flow with blood from the uterus through the vagina as a menstrual period.
Puberty and boys

Puberty usually occurs in boys between the ages of 10 and 16 years and an average of about 1 to 2 years later than when girls start puberty. Generally the first physical sign of puberty for boys is the enlargement of the testicles and penis and also the growth of pubic hair. A boy’s limbs, hands and feet will often grow faster than his torso and other parts of his body. His shoulders will start to broaden and he will also experience an increase in weight and muscle in line with the significant growth spurts that occur. Boys may also notice the development of an ‘Adam’s apple’ at the front of their throat and at this time their voice may be a little unpredictable, but at the end of puberty a boy’s voice will be deeper. Boys will start to grow more hair on their body and also on their face. Erections occur when boys are nervous or excited, but also for no particular reason.

Ejaculation

During puberty, boys experience their first ejaculation, which is a release of semen from the penis. Ejaculation usually occurs when a boy masturbates or when he has a nocturnal emission (wet dream). The epididymis is located at the back of the testes. It collects immature sperm from the testes. When the sperm mature, they are released into a tube called the vas deferens. The sperm travel up the vas deferens, where they mix with semen released by glands lining the vas deferens. They then travel through another tube called the urethra, which runs through the penis.
DID YOU KNOW?

Even tiny babies sometimes get erections but during puberty boys start getting more erections and sometimes without obvious cause.

Conception/reproduction

The most common way that the sperm enters the girl’s body is through sexual intercourse. This is when a boy’s erect penis is inserted into a girl’s vagina.

When an ovum (egg) and sperm unite, conception occurs — the start of a new life through the process of reproduction. The lining of the uterus provides nourishment to the foetus in the first stage of its life.

A fertilised ovum inside the uterus develops into a foetus.

Conception occurs when a sperm and ovum (egg) unite.
ACTIVITIES

1 Male and female puberty interactivity

1a Letter to a sibling

Write a letter to a younger sister or brother telling them what happens to a boy’s OR a girl’s body during puberty and why it is important that they don’t compare themselves to their friends during this time.

And/or

1b Radio interview

Follow the weblink to the free audio editor program Audacity in your Resources section to record a radio interview with a friend that informs people of the changes likely to take place as they enter puberty. The interview should aim to inform and reassure other students about their changing bodies.

2 Anonymous questions

Use a class question letter box or set up an online poll using the Poll everywhere weblink in your Resources section so students in your class can ask questions about puberty. These questions are anonymous so there is no need to feel a little embarrassed in front of the rest of the class.

CHECK & CHALLENGE

Explain

1. Describe what happens during the menstrual cycle.
2. Describe what happens during the process of conception.

Elaborate

3. Is every girl’s menstrual cycle the same? Why or why not?

Explain

4. Describe the path of sperm from where they are produced to when they are released during ejaculation.

5. Explain the process of puberty for boys.

Evaluate

6. What advice would you give a friend struggling with the physical changes of adolescence? Provide at least four strategies to help your friend cope.

3.3 Adolescence — the social, emotional and sexual developments

Many social, emotional and sexual developments occur during your adolescent years. The changes that occur during adolescence add another dimension to the complexity of relationships. During adolescence your family remains a big part of your life; however, you will generally seek greater support from your peers. You may also develop a more intimate relationship during this time. You may often seem a little emotionally unstable and have a higher sensitivity to your own feelings as well as the feelings of others.

ENGAGE

Adolescence is a time when you develop from a dependent child to an independent adult. The way in which you interact with others changes as you mature. You start to make decisions for yourselves and plan for the future. Adolescence is also a time when you start to develop a range of relationships that can be meaningful and long lasting.

Use the Dealing with puberty weblink in your Resources section to find out how others have experienced the changes that come with adolescence.
EXPLORE

Changing relationships

As we go through adolescence, we increasingly spend more time with our friends and less time with our family. Parents and family still play an important role in most young people’s lives by providing love, support and guidance as young people find their way to adulthood.

Forming a close group of friends who support you and to whom you feel connected can contribute to a positive sense of self. This group of friends is your peer group. Many young people want to be like their friends and want to be popular within their peer group. Sometimes, your peer group can put pressure on you to do certain things. This pressure may be negative, such as the pressure to smoke, or positive, such as encouragement to play sport. If you are being pressured to do something you don’t feel comfortable doing, it is a good idea to talk to someone (such as your parent or a teacher) about it and try to work out some strategies to deal with the issue. Just as our family influences us during childhood, our peer group plays a big role in helping to define who we are during adolescence.

Friends can provide positive support for you during adolescence.

During adolescence, there are times when we feel like, and want to be treated as, an adult; at other times, we feel like a child and want the security that our family gives us. Conflict with parents can occur when we want to do things independently. Parents worry because they know that young people sometimes take risks when they are out with friends. Try to work things out with your parents when a conflict arises. Listen to what they have to say, then talk to them about what you need. Share your ideas about what you can do to keep safe.

During adolescence, we start to become more aware of our sexuality and we can develop a desire or sexual attraction for another person. That other person can be someone of the opposite sex or
someone of the same sex. We may form a relationship with that person. In early adolescence, these relationships usually last for a short period. In late adolescence, relationships usually last longer and become more significant.

In late adolescence, it is common for parents, family and teachers to start to increase their expectations of you. Your parents will expect you to take more responsibility for the freedom that you want, including making decisions for yourself. Some of these decisions will be value-based, such as what’s right and what’s wrong. People will expect you to take responsibility for your thoughts, feelings and actions. This responsibility includes making decisions and accepting the consequences of those decisions.

Social change is about making new relationships that are independent of family, making decisions for yourself and taking responsibility for those decisions. These experiences help you develop a better understanding of yourself and will influence the path you choose in life.

**Gender, cultural and sexual identity**

Adolescence is a time when individuals develop their own unique identity. In this process young people explore their own values to form their identity and because of the overpowering need to ‘fit in’, it can be especially challenging for teens who feel different from others. In establishing an understanding of cultural identity, an individual is defining key aspects of themselves in relation to their cultural environment and surroundings. For example, a student whose parents migrated to Australia would have elements of the culture of both their parents’ country of origin and the Australian identity they have developed.

**Gender**

Gender identity refers to whether people consider themselves to be primarily masculine, primarily feminine, or some combination of both. Sex refers to being male or female, while gender refers to the socially defined roles and characteristics of men and women. To provide an example, just over 100 years ago women were not allowed to vote. This was based on their gender, a characteristic of the role that women played in society at that time. However, unlike our sex, which is determined biologically, gender refers to a set of qualities that include our personal attributes, social role, social customs and behaviours. These beliefs influence our identity. They can shape our attitudes and behaviours. Sometimes, there is a lot of pressure on us to behave in certain ways or to fit a certain stereotype.

Adolescence is a time when individuals question what it means to be part of their gender. In early adolescence, a young person’s understanding of gender is quite rigid and stereotyped. Males are identified as being tough and masculine, and females are identified as being very feminine and ladylike. Later in adolescence, there is a more flexible understanding in relation to gender roles and there is greater appreciation of diversity within gender identity.

Gender is best understood along a continuum, ranging from purely masculine to purely feminine, with most people falling somewhere in between. Gender identity should not be confused with sexual orientation. Gender identity describes what gender/s people consider themselves to be and sexual orientation refers to the gender/s people are attracted to.
Culture

The transition into adolescence is marked in different ways around the world. The cultural influence on our development and identity is a large one. In some cultures, biological changes associated with puberty are celebrated in ceremonial ways to mark the transition from childhood into adolescence. In Western culture, it is less ceremonial, but still shown in the way adolescents change the way they dress, look and interact with others as they experience physical transformation.

Where we come from or the group we identify with can influence our beliefs about ourselves. These changes are influenced by the people we relate to, the people we spend most time with and the expectations and norms of the society we live in. Although our genetics might have some influence on the person we eventually become, the environment we are raised in plays a large part in the formation of cultural identity.

People often show their cultural identity through the customs they follow, their behaviours, the way in which they dress, the language they use and their celebrations. The country that people come from or their cultural background (such as Samoan or Chinese culture) can define cultural groups. Many Indigenous Australians identify themselves by their nation; for example, 'I'm a Dharawal man' or 'I'm an Eora woman'. Depending on the number of places they have lived and where their parents and grandparents lived, they may identify themselves as belonging to several nations. Cultural groups can also be defined by a common interest, such as the skateboarding culture.

The reason we tend to conform to the culture we belong to is that it provides us with a feeling of security. Most people do not like to feel different from those around us and would prefer to be included as part of a group.

Sexual identity

Adolescence is a time when you are learning about who you are sexually attracted to and this can change and keep on changing.

During adolescence, hormonal and physical changes also lead to the development of new sexual feelings, and this can cause some concern. It may take a little while for an adolescent to understand their sexual feelings. While developing an understanding of their sexual feelings, it is not uncommon for adolescents to be attracted to people of both the same sex and opposite sex. Researchers believe that sexual orientation and preference is developed from a complex combination of biological, psychological and environmental factors. Getting through adolescence can be particularly challenging for LGBTI people; however, community attitudes are changing, with one benefit being an increase in the value placed on diversity in relationships. This is helping to make the often confusing and tumultuous time of adolescence easier for people of any sexual orientation.

The developments in sexuality shown below occur in most young people during adolescence. However, each adolescent may develop each aspect at different times to others.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teens/adolescence</td>
<td>Understand the options and consequences of how they sexually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13–17 years)</td>
<td>express themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Express their sexuality in a variety of ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognise the components of positive and negative relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have the ability to make informed choices about sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have an understanding of their own sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emotional maturity**

Developing an understanding of emotions and feelings is part of the emotional change that happens during adolescence. Children often do not understand their feelings and can act out feelings in negative ways, such as by starting fights and arguing. As we grow and mature emotionally, we become better at understanding and managing our feelings and behaviours.

Some changes that show us we are maturing emotionally include:

- identifying our own feelings
- using our feelings to make good decisions
- managing stressful moods
- controlling impulses
- being motivated and optimistic
- bouncing back after a difficult time
- managing our emotions in a positive way
- communicating with others in a respectful way
- expressing ourselves appropriately
- planning for the future and goal-setting
- solving problems rather than avoiding them
- resolving conflicts in non-violent ways.
Adolescence is a time of mixed emotions.

Achieving all these changes takes time and work. This means you need to think about what you are feeling rather than just reacting, and you need to work out positive ways in which to deal with challenges and cope with difficult situations. Talking to people you trust and who can help you is a good start to helping you understand and manage your emotions.

Follow the Emotions weblink in your Resources section to learn more about being aware of your emotions.

What does it mean to be ‘mature’?

The rate at which we mature physically and emotionally is different for all of us. As we have learnt, in most cases, girls start to physically mature before boys and tend to reach physical maturity before boys. Some young people who physically mature early may be put in situations in which they are expected to be more emotionally mature than they actually are. Remember, just because a person is physically mature, we cannot assume they are emotionally mature, and just because a person is emotionally mature, we cannot assume they are physically mature.

Emotional maturity can vary significantly among adolescents of the same age. The rate at which a person matures emotionally depends on a range of factors, including how they are treated by their parents and family, their personality, their relationships with other people (including their peers) and the expectations placed on them. Look around at the people in your year at school. You can probably identify those who are more mature by the respectful way in which they treat others and the positive way in which they deal with their emotions.
As you become older, you will be expected to make decisions about your life and take responsibility for those decisions by accepting the consequences.

If you are upset, take some time out to think about how you are feeling before you react.

‘The 24 hour rule’ is to wait for 24 hours before responding to an upsetting email. You are more likely to have a better and more effective response after you cool down.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Your emotional intelligence (EQ) is your ability to understand, use and manage your emotions. Some studies suggest that EQ is more important than IQ (intellectual quotient – a test of your academic ability) when it comes to being more successful in life.
ACTIVITIES

1 Negotiating a win–win

1. Use the Negotiating a win–win worksheet in your Resources section to work through the process to reach a positive decision.

2 I’m just 12!

Divide into small groups, read the scenario below and answer the questions that follow.

Andrea is a 12-year-old girl who has physically matured into a young woman. Ben, who is 17 years old and in Year 11, starts to give her lots of attention and lets her know he is sexually attracted to her. He is treating her as though she is much older than she is. She has never experienced this situation before and doesn’t know what to do.

1. What might Andrea be feeling?
2. What might Andrea do or say to manage this situation?
3. Brainstorm why a relationship between a 12-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy is not a good idea.

3 Prezi presentation

Use the Prezi weblink in your Resources section to develop a presentation with the title ‘Adolescence — the social and emotional changes’.

4 Emotional triggers

Write an example of a scenario that may make you feel each emotion listed below and also record how you respond to each emotion.

• Aggravated
• Angry
• Depressed
• Content
• Scared
• Worried
• Happy
• Energised

5 A way with language — saying ‘That’s so gay’ is so yesterday

Follow the Think before you speak weblink in your Resources section and watch the video.

Language is very powerful and can be a great tool to change stereotypes and attitudes. Write a speech or produce a video clip that could be presented at your school assembly that aims to reduce the use of homophobic and hurtful language in your school.

CHECK & CHALLENGE

Evaluate

1. Identify two important relationships in your life and explain why they are important.
2. How have your parents’ and teachers’ expectations of you changed as you have grown from childhood into adolescence?

Explain

3. Explain what is meant by ‘managing your emotions in a positive way’. Give at least one example to support your explanation.
4. What are five characteristics of an emotionally mature person?
5. Identify ways in which you can resolve conflict using compromise.
6. Explain the developments that occur in relation to your sexuality.
7. What factors influence your sexual orientation and preference?

Elaborate

8. What advice would you give a good friend to help them express their feelings and thoughts in a positive way?
9. What are the possible outcomes when you express your feelings and thoughts in a positive way?
3.4 Sexual health

Being sexually attracted to other people is something that everyone experiences. Thinking about sex and having sexual feelings is normal. In this lesson you will explore your rights and responsibilities when in a sexual relationship and learn how to make positive choices regarding your sexual health.

ENGAGE

Sexual health is an important part of most young people's lives. The first deep attractions for someone else often occur during adolescence. Romantic relationships may start to happen and can become a central focus in your life.

Adolescence is also a time of heightened sexual feelings and experimentation. It is a time when you become more familiar with your body and discover what feels good for you. You may even fall in love. If you start a close relationship, making good decisions about your sexual health should be a priority.

EXPLORE

We all have sexual feelings

Having sexual feelings is a normal part of puberty. Becoming more aware of your own body, touching your body and thinking about others in a sexual way is okay. You may find that you think or dream about being sexual with someone else. Wet dreams, for both boys and girls, happen because we have sexual feelings in our dreams while we are asleep.

Sex is more than a physical act. It is about feeling a closeness or intimacy with someone you are attracted to. As you go through adolescence, you may be attracted to a number of different people. Some will be of the opposite sex. You may also find you are attracted to someone of the same sex. You may or may not have a relationship with another person.

Relationships can vary greatly. Choosing to be in a relationship is your decision, and the level of intimacy you share is something that needs to be agreed on by both people in the relationship.

Figuring out your role

Gender expectations can put pressure on young people in relationships. Some boys think it is their role to be the dominant one, make the decisions, be sexually active, and have many sexual experiences. Some girls think that to keep their boyfriends happy they have to be sexually active with them.

These beliefs can lead to young people engaging in sexual activity when they don’t want to, or taking risks by having many sexual partners and unsafe sex. The level of intimacy or sexual activity
you engage in should be your choice. You should not be pressured into doing things you are not ready to do. If your partner is not willing to wait until you are ready, then they do not respect you.

Gender expectations in sexual relationships and peer pressure can lead to young people engaging in sexual activity when they are not ready. It is important to know your rights and to be respected in sexual relationships.

Exploring and expressing sexual feelings appropriately

Everyone experiences sexual feelings. Feeling attracted to someone and having sexual thoughts and dreams are expressions of sexual feelings that are natural.

When you enter into a relationship with another person, you may decide to explore these feelings further as a way of becoming closer to that person and expressing your affection. The decision to become sexually active is a personal one, and it may take you time to decide whether you are ready. You should not feel pressured by your partner or friends. Remember, having sex does not necessarily mean someone loves you. Remember, too, that it is possible to enjoy a loving relationship without being sexually intimate.

Forms of sexual activity

Regardless of who you are attracted to, there are many forms of sexual activity besides intercourse that allow you to express your feelings for someone. Holding hands, hugging, kissing, touching,
massaging and having oral sex are examples of sexual behaviour that do not involve penetration. When deciding whether you want to be sexually active, think carefully about what you feel comfortable and safe doing. Talk to the other person about what you both want from the relationship and see whether your expectations are similar. This discussion will clarify the expectations in the relationship and reduce the chance that someone will later feel rejected and used.

**Sexual relationships — your rights and responsibilities**

Sexual relationships can be wonderful when they include trust, respect, commitment and intimacy. When sexual relationships are just about self-satisfaction, they can often be hurtful for both people. Think about the future consequences, not just how you feel now. How will you feel afterwards — will the other person still be interested in you and respect you? What can happen if the sex isn’t safe?

Everyone has rights and responsibilities in a relationship; when the relationship involves sex, the risks are even greater.

**Table 3.3: Rights and responsibilities in sexual relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be loved and accepted for who you are</td>
<td>To respect the other person’s opinions, needs and choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be respected as a whole person and not just a sexual object</td>
<td>Not to pressure the other person into having sex or engaging in sexual activities they are not comfortable with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To express your thoughts, needs and desires without fear</td>
<td>To discuss what each person wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be safe by making the choice to use protection when having sex and doing only things you are comfortable with</td>
<td>To listen to what the other person has to say about their involvement in a sexual relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To choose not to have sex if you are not ready or when you don’t want to</td>
<td>To provide and use protection when having sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To respect the other person by not telling others about it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTIVITY**

**Rights and responsibilities**

1. Divide into small groups and discuss each of the following statements.
   a. The decision to be sexually active is an individual one.
b. Only boys experience sexual feelings.

c. Girls should do what the boy wants in a relationship.

d. Boys should do what the girl wants in a relationship.

2. As a class, share your viewpoints.

CHECK & CHALLENGE

Explain

1. Identify the influences on young males and females regarding decisions about whether to be sexually active.

Elaborate

2. Who is responsible for safe sex practices? Why?

Explain

3. What are your rights and responsibilities in sexual relationships?

Elaborate

4. How can you ensure your sexual relationships in the future are positive?

5. If you are being pressured by your partner to be sexually active but you do not want to, what could you do? Describe the consequences of each option you identify.

3.5 Sexual choices and their consequences: contraception

Making the choice to become sexually active is a very big decision. All actions have consequences, so it is important to make positive sexual choices that will benefit your health. In this lesson you will learn about contraception and how to be safe should you choose to be sexually active.
ENGAGE

The decision to be sexually active is an individual one. Although a sexual relationship can make you feel special at the time, it is important to weigh up the risks involved. You should talk to your partner or a trusted friend about the possible consequences, and about how these may affect your health, relationship and future plans.

EXPLORE

Unplanned pregnancy

Unplanned pregnancy is one possible consequence of choosing to be sexually active. Although adolescent parents may be able to manage their own and their children’s lives, many sacrifices are required and many responsibilities are involved, particularly for the mother. Unplanned parenthood affects schooling, career opportunities, friendships and independence. Young mothers may face put downs, negative stereotypes and discrimination from society. Family and relationship conflict can also arise from the additional costs, pressures and responsibilities associated with being a parent, especially when someone does not have the emotional maturity or commitment required for the role.

Other alternatives for unplanned pregnancies, such as a termination or adoption, can be equally difficult. The fact that some young people do not want their family or friends to know they or their partner are pregnant can limit the emotional support that is available. For young people whose religious, cultural or family beliefs conflict with these options, decisions about an unplanned pregnancy can be particularly challenging.

Contraception

If you are considering having sexual intercourse in an opposite-sex attracted relationship and you do not want to fall pregnant, or have your partner fall pregnant, you need to use some methods of contraception. Contraception refers to any method or device that prevents conception and, therefore, a pregnancy. There are many different types of contraception available for both males and females. It is important to remember that no contraceptive is 100 per cent effective at stopping a pregnancy — this can be guaranteed only by not having vaginal intercourse.
HEALTH FACT

The age of consent for engaging in sexual intercourse is 16 years. Condoms can be purchased at various retail outlets such as chemists, supermarkets and petrol stations. They are also sometimes available in vending machines located in public toilets and are given away at most family planning clinics. Young women can be prescribed the contraceptive pill when they are 16 years old without needing parental consent. They can also go to a family planning clinic without their parents if they are 14 years or older.

Table 3.4: Contraceptives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How it works</th>
<th>Possible side effects</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
<th>How it is obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **The pill** — a small tablet made up of two female hormones, oestrogen and progestin (a synthetic hormone) | The pill stops an egg from being released from the ovaries each month. One pill must be taken every day, starting from the first day of the menstrual cycle. | • Irregular bleeding between periods  
• Sore breasts  
• Nausea  
• Weight gain | Safe to be used by most women. Women with heart conditions, high blood pressure, liver problems, certain migraines or who are heavy smokers should talk to their doctor first. | It is obtained by prescription after having a medical check-up by a doctor or at a family planning clinic. |
| **Progestin Only Pill (POP) or minipill** — like the pill, but containing only progestins | This pill makes the mucus at the entrance of the uterus thicker so sperm cannot get through it. It also alters the lining of the uterus. | • Spotting between periods  
• Irregularity in menstrual cycle | Safe to be used by most women except those with cancer of the reproductive organs or those who have had an ectopic pregnancy. | It is obtained by prescription after having a medical check-up by a doctor or at a family planning clinic. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How it works</th>
<th>Possible side effects</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
<th>How it is obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **IUD** (intrauterine device) — a small plastic device that is placed inside the uterus | The IUD hampers the sperm’s survival in the uterus. It also causes changes in the lining of the uterus so an egg cannot grow in it. | • Cramps and bleeding after insertion  
• Period pain and heavier periods | Can be used by women who have had a baby. It should not be used by people who have more than one sexual partner or who change partners regularly. | It is inserted and removed by a doctor. A local anaesthetic is often used when it is inserted. |
<p>| <strong>Condom</strong> — a rubber sheath that goes over the penis when erect | The condom is rolled over an erect penis before sex so semen and the sperm in it are collected inside the condom when ejaculation occurs. The condom is then removed after sex. | None, except some people may be allergic to latex rubber or the lubricant that covers it | Can be used by all males | It can be purchased from various outlets, including chemists, supermarkets, vending machines and sexual health clinics. |
| <strong>Female condom (femidom)</strong> — a long polyurethane tube with a flexible ring at each end | It is inserted into the vagina before intercourse to act as a barrier for sperm. | None | Suitable for all women | It is available from most sexual health clinics, some women’s health centres and chemists. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How it works</th>
<th>Possible side effects</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
<th>How it is obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contraceptive implant</strong> such as Implanon — a small plastic rod containing progestin that is inserted under the skin of the upper arm</td>
<td>The slow release of progestin stops ovulation occurring while also changing the uterus lining so an egg cannot grow.</td>
<td>• Irregular bleeding</td>
<td>Suitable for most women</td>
<td>It is inserted and removed by a doctor. A local anaesthetic is usually used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diaphragm</strong> — a small rubber dome that is inserted into the vagina</td>
<td>When placed in the vagina, it covers the cervix so sperm are unable to reach an egg.</td>
<td>A small number of women may be allergic to the rubber in the diaphragm material.</td>
<td>Suitable for any woman who is comfortable fitting and removing it</td>
<td>It is obtained by prescription from a doctor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural methods</strong> — these involve various methods of determining the fertile phase of a woman’s menstrual cycle and avoiding intercourse at these times. Natural methods are the least effective contraceptives and should only be used in conjunction with other forms of contraception.</td>
<td>• <strong>Calendar method</strong> — recording dates of periods to determine when ovulation may take place   &lt;br&gt;• <strong>Temperature method</strong> — recording temperature daily to monitor changes that occur with ovulation  &lt;br&gt;• <strong>Mucus changes</strong> — recognising</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Can be used by anyone. However, time, patience and commitment are required to learn how to recognise signs of fertility and calculate ‘safe’ times for sex. Discipline is also needed by both partners to avoid intercourse at unsafe times. The calendar method can be</td>
<td>Advice on how to recognise and record signs of ovulation should be obtained from a doctor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ACTIVITY

**Telling it like it is**

1. Use the *Sex and sexuality quiz* weblink in your Resources section to find out how much you know. Write the correct answers for any questions you got wrong in your workbook.

2. Create two new questions to add to the quiz and write them out on a slip of paper along with the correct answer. Your teacher will then shuffle all the new questions and pose some of them to the class. Take note of the questions you could not answer correctly.

### CHECK & CHALLENGE

**Explain**

1. a. Identify two types of contraceptives that would be appropriate for young, sexually active people to use.
   
   b. What are the benefits and where can they be purchased?

**Elaborate**

2. How can your emotional health be affected when you become sexually active at a young age?
Evaluate

3. Do you agree with the law that the age of consent for engaging in sexual intercourse is 16 years? Give reasons for your answer.

4. What are the benefits of condoms over other contraceptives?

3.6 Sexual choices and their consequences: STIs

Once you become sexually active, you risk contracting infections and illnesses that are caused by unsafe sexual activity. Many of these infections have few or no visible symptoms but can cause great damage to our health. In this lesson you will learn about some of these infections and the responsible behaviour needed to remain healthy.

ENGAGE

When people choose not to have protected sex, they are at risk of catching a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Many infections are transmitted through sexual activity. You can avoid catching many STIs by using a condom during sex. Prevention for STIs that are blood borne, such as hepatitis B, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), includes not sharing needles, syringes or drug injecting equipment.

Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about your sexual health.
EXPLORE

Blood-borne viruses

A **blood-borne virus** is a virus that can be transmitted from an infected person to another person through blood-to-blood contact. This includes sharing of injecting equipment. Commonly known blood-borne viruses include HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B and C.

In the majority of cases, hepatitis B is contracted through sexual activity, whereas hepatitis C is transmitted through the sharing of injecting equipment.

**Table 3.5: Sexually transmitted infections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STI</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chlamydia</strong> is a common STI that affects both men and women. If left untreated, it can lead to infertility.</td>
<td>In most people infected with chlamydia, there are no symptoms. If symptoms are present, they occur 7–21 days after infection and include a discharge from the penis, pain when urinating, abnormal vaginal discharge, abnormal vaginal bleeding, pelvis pain or pain during sex.</td>
<td>Antibiotics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genital herpes</strong> is caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV). It is contracted through close skin-to-skin contact.</td>
<td>Painful, tingling or itchy blisters or ulcers on the genitals</td>
<td>Antiviral tablets. There is no cure. Once you have the virus, it lies dormant and can cause more outbreaks in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genital warts</strong> are caused by a virus and transmitted via skin-to-skin sexual contact.</td>
<td>Lumps on the genitals that are cauliflower-like or flatter. Often painless. Much more difficult to see in women because they may be inside the vagina.</td>
<td>Warts can be removed by freezing, burning or laser, or by applying liquid wart paints or creams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gonorrhoea</strong> can infect the urethra, anus, cervix, throat and eyes of both men and women.</td>
<td>Burning or discomfort when urinating or an abnormal discharge from the vagina or penis</td>
<td>Antibiotics. Sexual contact should be avoided until infection has cleared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hepatitis B</strong> is caused by a virus that affects the liver. It is a blood-borne virus spread through sexual</td>
<td>You may have no symptoms, flu-like symptoms or nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain or jaundice (yellowing of the skin).</td>
<td>Resting and avoiding alcohol and other drugs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STI</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>activity, sharing of syringes/needles,</td>
<td>There is a vaccination that prevents hepatitis B.</td>
<td>will help recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>childbirth, or sharing of toothbrushes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or razors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-gonococcal urethritis</strong> is an</td>
<td>Slightly clear, white or cloudy discharge from the penis and/or burning</td>
<td>Antibiotics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inflammation of the urethra in males.</td>
<td>or discomfort when urinating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)</strong> is</td>
<td>Abdominal pain, pain during sex, a fever, irregular periods, abnormal</td>
<td>Antibiotics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an infection in the uterus or fallopian</td>
<td>vaginal discharge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tubes in females, caused by the bacteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that causes chlamydia.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### HIV and AIDS

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) damages the body’s immune system so it cannot fight off disease and infection. AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency virus) is the later stages of HIV infection.

HIV is transmitted through:

- unprotected vaginal intercourse
- unprotected anal intercourse
- sharing drug injecting equipment
- a skin wound coming into contact with the blood of an infected person
- an infected mother passing the virus to her baby during pregnancy, at childbirth or during breastfeeding.

HIV can only be contracted by coming into contact with infected blood. This means that HIV cannot be transmitted through kissing or cuddling, shaking hands, sharing knives, forks, cups, glasses, plates or toilet seats.

Most people with HIV look and feel healthy. Many people will not have any symptoms for several years after becoming infected, and some people will have no symptoms at all. When symptoms occur, they can include one or more of the following.

- Over half of people with HIV will develop flu-like symptoms one to six weeks after becoming infected.
- Later, the infection may cause unexplained diarrhoea, weight loss, rashes, fever or one of the AIDS conditions.
- AIDS conditions include pneumonia, brain infections and skin cancers, which occur because the immune system is too weak to defend the body.
A blood test can determine whether you have HIV; it may take three months before the virus shows up in the blood test. HIV and AIDS can be prevented by using a condom during-sexual activity and not sharing drug injecting equipment.

**Looking after your emotional health**

Good sexual choices will not only help you to manage your physical health, but they will also help look after your emotional wellbeing. Feeling used, being pressured into something, worrying about pregnancy or catching an STI can contribute to feelings of guilt, shame and embarrassment. These feelings can be even stronger when sexual choices are made while you are affected by drugs and/or alcohol, because you may not be able to recall who you were with or remember what happened. If other people see or hear about your sexual choices, you can find yourself open to gossip, rumours or negative stereotypes that can be very hurtful.

Decisions about sexual activity should be based on what you feel is right for you and what is respectful for your partner.

**HEALTH FACT**

Eighty per cent of reported cases of chlamydia affect 15–29 year old Australians. Reported cases of chlamydia have quadrupled over the last 10 years, in part because of increased awareness about the risks of leaving sexual health problems unchecked.
ACTIVITY

Sexually transmitted infections

1. In pairs, research one sexually transmitted infection or one blood-borne virus. Use the internet or the weblinks in your Resources section.

2. Design a fact sheet that includes the following information.
   a. What causes the infection
   b. How it affects the body
   c. How it is transmitted from person to person
   d. Who is at risk
   e. How it is treated
   f. Ways to prevent contraction

CHECK & CHALLENGE

Explain

1. What does HIV stand for, and how does it affect the body?
2. How is HIV transmitted?
3. What conditions are associated with AIDS?
4. Describe four ways in which people can prevent STIs and blood-borne viruses from spreading.

Elaborate

5. Identify the consequences for males and females who decide to become sexually active at a young age.
3.7 Surviving puberty

The many changes that occur during puberty can make for a challenging time, but it is important to remember that everyone who has reached adulthood has gone through it. You don’t need to feel alone when trying to deal with all of the changes that take place because a trusted adult can help you during this time. They do understand how you feel. Everyone is different and will deal with puberty in their own way. It is a natural part of growing up, but each person is different. Some of your friends may reach puberty earlier or later than you. You may also feel that your body and mind don’t match in terms of maturity. It is best to demystify the topic, do the background research and be willing to ask questions.

ENGAGE

You have learned about the many changes that occur during puberty. It is both an exciting and challenging time. Your brain is continuing to develop and is not fully matured, so it can be a tricky time to navigate your way through. There are some handy strategies that you can use to make it a little easier.

EXPLORE

Your developing brain

Some of the changes in teenage behaviour are explained by the way teenage brains develop. Your brain was about 95 per cent of its full size by the time you reached six years of age; however, your brain will not be fully developed or remodelled until your mid-twenties. The parts of your brain that don’t fully mature until this time are responsible for impulse control and this means that you are more likely to make decisions without thinking through the consequences. The amount of remodelling is quite intense during puberty, and the changes that occur will depend upon experience, age and hormonal changes. Most teenagers’ brains develop in roughly the same way and at relatively similar times; however, there can also be differences based upon when they start puberty.

The major change to the brain that occurs during puberty is that unused neural pathways in the grey matter are ‘pruned’ away and other neural pathways are strengthened. It is the brain’s way of becoming more effective. This process of pruning and strengthening (remodelling) the neural pathways starts in the back of the brain and front (prefrontal cortex) of the brain is remodelled last. The prefrontal cortex is responsible for the decision making behaviours such as planning, knowing consequences of actions, problem solving and ability to control impulses. As the prefrontal cortex is still developing, the amygdala is called upon more significantly in the decision making process. The amygdala is generally associated with emotions and this may account for the moodiness, outbursts and unpredictable behaviours shown during this time.
HEALTH FACT

The brain undergoes massive remodelling during puberty, causing several years of developing new neural pathways.

Dealing with puberty

When things get difficult, remember that every adult in the world has gone through the period of change you are experiencing now. All your friends are going through the same thing. The following tips can be useful to remember when you are dealing with the changes of puberty:

- Read and learn about the physical, emotional and social changes of puberty so you have a better idea of what to expect.
- Talk to your doctor or another health professional if you are worried about aspects of your development or do not understand some of the changes in your body.
- Be patient with your parents. Remember, they are trying to do what is best for you. If there are disagreements, listen to what your parents have to say and then let them know your view.
- Try to negotiate with your parents. You need to show them that you are responsible by making good decisions, letting them know your plans and compromising in some situations.
- Remember that you will mature at your own pace because you are a unique person and everyone is different.
- Continue to exercise regularly as this will relieve stress and ensure that your hormones remain within the normal range for your age. It is recommended that you achieve 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.
**DID YOU KNOW?**

Endorphins are chemicals that come from the pituitary gland. They help relieve pain and can provide you with a feeling of happiness. When you exercise rigorously, you stimulate your pituitary gland into producing a lot of endorphins, which in turn make you feel happy. This is one of the reasons why exercise can help you relieve stress and manage your emotions.

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**Managing your emotions**

During adolescence, we start to think independently of our parents and family and we form our own ideas, attitudes and values. We start discovering the world for ourselves; we learn more about ourselves and have thoughts about who we are and what our place is in the world. As we grow and experience life, our views and beliefs change. We start developing our own identity as individuals.

As our bodies change in size and shape, what we think about our body also changes. For some young people, the rapid growth of their body can be embarrassing. They can become very self-conscious, particularly if their body is growing and changing ahead of the bodies of their friends. The increase in the release of hormones not only affects our physical growth but can also heighten the emotions we experience. It is common for adolescents to start to feel extremes in their emotions that are sometimes difficult to manage. When you are finding it difficult to manage your emotions, remember, with the help and support of trusted adults and friends, it can be made much easier. Try to calmly explain your frustrations to a trusted adult and ask for some space so that you can develop your personality. Maintaining effective communication with your family will make it easier to deal with.

Keep lines of communication with trusted adults open.
Managing stress

Adolescence is a time of change and meeting new challenges and with this comes emotions to meet these challenges, including frustration, fear, anxiety and confusion. Being in tune with your emotional responses is one skill that you will develop as you grow up. In addition to recognising these emotions, it is also crucial to your wellbeing to know how best you can manage them.

Stress is a natural emotional and physical response to challenging or dangerous situations. It is part of our biological make-up that when we are fearful/scared/aroused, two hormones, adrenaline and cortisol, are released from the adrenal glands. They cause the heart rate and blood pressure to increase, and activate certain centres of the brain so that the body is ready for ‘fight or flight’. This physical response to stress prepares our body for action. The body is well equipped for dealing with these short stressful situations. It only becomes a problem if the stress is long term and enduring. This is when stress can be most damaging to both the mind and body. The same hormones that produce the flight or fight experience are thought to also damage the functioning of the brain when exposed to stress for lengthy periods. When a person’s body releases adrenaline and cortisol for a sustained period of time due to stress, it can lead to depression.

Mission Australia’s annual youth survey highlighted that coping with stress was the top concern of youth surveyed aged between 15 and 19. By taking control of your attitudes and emotions, you can better manage stressful situations.

Things that cause stress are called ‘stressors’. A stressor for one person may not be a stressor for another. Stress can be caused by internal factors, such as how we perceive a situation or our attitude to it, or external factors, such as events or situations, such as public speaking. If we let stress control our emotions it can lead to poor health, both mentally and physically. So where do we start to maintain good mental health and wellbeing?

1. Identify the signs that you or someone you know is stressed.
2. Identify the triggers (or the sources) of stress. By identifying the causes of stress it is easier to develop strategies to manage it. Make a list of all the situations or thoughts that cause you stress. Examples could include fear of failing and worrying about a sick relative.
3. Recognising that you have a source of stress is the most important step.
4. The following simple strategies aim to reduce stress and minimise cortisol levels in your brain. Try them:
   - Physical activity: 20–30 minutes of physical activity has the effect of ‘burning up’ cortisol. The higher the intensity, the better the effect. Try cycling, running, weights, swimming, running to the bus or walking to the shops. Physical activity releases the ‘feel good’ hormones called endorphins, which alleviate the effects of stress.
   - Deep breathing or mindfulness.
   - Social connections: although we are more ‘connected’ via IT devices than ever before, spending face to face time together with family and peers seems to foster genuine connectivity. How often do you have an opportunity to do this?
   - Have fun: laughter has been clinically shown to reduce stress hormone levels. Finding ways to include laughter and humour in your day has a positive impact on stress.
• Listening to music you like: music changes your mood, so try to include some music in your day.

ACTIVITIES

1 Surviving puberty — classroom debate

‘Some young people seem to go through puberty without any problems at all.’
Do you believe this statement? Explain why you do or you don’t. Develop a classroom debate scenario which incorporates both the affirmative and negative sides to this statement.

2 Interview with a trusted adult

Write some interview questions that you would like to ask a trusted adult about their experience of puberty.

Some example questions could include:

1. What do you remember most about going through puberty?
2. How did you learn about puberty?
3. What physical, social and emotional changes can I expect will happen and how can I best be prepared for those changes?
4. What aspects of puberty did you find most challenging?
5. What would be one piece of advice you would give young people currently going through puberty?
6. What other strategies can we use to best navigate through this time together?

3 Send a postcard to a parent or trusted adult

Your postcard is to include information about at least three web pages or online articles that you feel are really effective in providing the best advice to parents or trusted adults in helping adolescents navigate their way through puberty. Make sure that you include the URL as a link and provide a short explanation as to why you think they should visit that page and read that material.

4 ‘Break the taboo’ and ‘let’s get through it together’ — poster advertising campaign

Create a poster advertising campaign that ‘breaks the silence’ and demystifies the changes that occur during puberty. The aim of the campaign is also to promote the idea that you can get through it together.

You can create your campaign either by hand as a hardcopy poster or digitally designed. To create a digital design, use the Pic-collage weblink in your Resources section.
5 Keep your cool

We all have certain things, situations, or people that cause us to lose our cool from time to time.

a. Make a list of the situations that generally cause you to ‘lose your cool’.

When you begin to identify your stressors (event that causes stress), you can become skilled at dealing with them appropriately.

b. Next to each identified stressor write down the most appropriate and effective way for you to deal with it.

c. List three websites that can assist in providing support when you are feeling overwhelmed.

6 Managing stress

Use the Stress busting weblink in your Resources section to find a list of strategies to manage stress. Choose three you can put into practice tomorrow. Try them and see what impact they had on your body and mind.

CHECK & CHALLENGE

Explain

1. What happens as your brain matures?

2. Why might the rapid growth of their body be embarrassing for some young people?

Elaborate

3. List two people with whom you could talk who could help you deal with the changes of puberty. Describe the types of advice they could offer.

Explain

4. Why is it important to be patient with your parents if a conflict arises?

Evaluate

5. When you feel your emotions rising, how do you help yourself calm down?
3.8 The challenges of adolescence

Adolescence is a time of big change and big changes take time. You will be faced with making lots of decisions through adolescence and these decisions may have a significant impact on the rest of your life. Adolescence has always been a complicated stage of development, but today’s rapid information and communication technology makes it even more complex. You need to be strong, creative, resourceful and hopeful in order to deal with the challenges that you will face. Seek advice from someone you trust and approach the challenges with a positive attitude.

ENGAGE

Adolescence is a time of tremendous growth and potential, but it may also be a time of considerable risk. Five key elements will help guide you through this time of change:

1. Organisation: prioritise, plan and set goals to maintain life balance.

2. Communication: maintain open and honest communication lines with your parents, carers, teachers, peers, coaches and other significant trusted adults.

3. Respect: have respect for the people in your life, and especially for yourself.

4. Take care of your health: your body is growing and changing significantly and that requires you to look after it well with good nutrition, exercise and rest.

5. Don’t be afraid to ask for help: from your parents, carers, school counsellors, teachers and other trusted adults or access organisations such as headspace, Kids Helpline, ReachOut and Family Planning Victoria.

Worksheet

How do I feel about the challenges in my life?

Searchlight ID: doc-14652
Adolescence is like an apprenticeship — it is the time when you learn how to be an adult. This learning process will involve new situations and challenges that you have not previously experienced. Dealing with these changes is part of the apprenticeship, and learning to make good decisions and knowing where to find support will help you cope with the challenges ahead. Some examples of the changes and challenges that most young people face during adolescence are:

- dealing with the physical changes that emerge during puberty
- managing the heightened emotions that emerge during puberty
- going to a new school
- making new friends and trying to fit into a peer group
- studying even more and being under pressure to achieve in senior studies
- having more responsibility at home, such as doing more chores or taking care of younger brothers or sisters
- making decisions about future study and work
- dealing with negative peer pressure
- experiencing relationship breakdown
• experiencing conflict with parents.

For some young people, the challenges can be even greater, such as:
• caring for a sick parent or family member
• becoming a young parent
• moving to another country and adapting to a new culture and a different language
• experiencing family breakdown, parents divorcing and living between two households
• coping with significant health problems.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

When everyone in the family is involved in creating the family rules and negotiates the consequences for breaking them, this helps everyone to understand and accept the rules. Family rules help you to feel safe and secure.

### Fears and feelings

As you experience one or more of the challenges discussed previously, you will be faced with a range of feelings and have fears about meeting these challenges. This is quite normal. It may be that you are feeling scared or feeling that you do not fit in, that you cannot cope with the situation you are faced with, or that you may be afraid of failing. These are common fears and feelings. It is important that when you are faced with a challenge, you recognise what you are capable of, what you need to do to cope and to whom you can go for support and advice.

### Dealing with change and conflicting demands

Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed by the demands placed on you? Do you feel you are not coping and that you do not know what to do about it? These feelings are not uncommon, especially when you have lots of things to deal with at once, such as starting a new school, doing homework, doing chores at home, meeting sport commitments and fitting in social time with friends.

When faced with changes that are challenging, it is best to have a range of strategies to help you cope. It is important to be aware that a strategy may be useful in one situation but not in another, so think about which one will be most helpful to you. Here are some more ideas that can help you to cope with the challenges of adolescence:

• Talk to your parents or teachers about your concerns and ask them to help you devise strategies to manage these challenges.

• Plan for the outcome you want rather than letting the situation happen.
- Prioritise — look at what is important, what needs to be done straight away and what you can do over a period of time.

- Ask others for advice.

- Talk to a counsellor.

- Think positively about how the situation will turn out.

- Relax by doing things you like, such as playing on the computer, going for a bike ride, going shopping, walking the dog, drawing, painting, writing or listening to music.

- Be realistic in what you can and cannot manage, and then set goals.

- Make sure you look after your health — eat nutritious foods, exercise regularly and get enough sleep.

- Ask for help if you need it.

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**Weblinks**

- headspace
- Kids Helpline
- ReachOut
- Family Planning Victoria

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Juggling the changes and challenges of adolescence requires good decision making, planning and seeking help when you need it.
We all experience mixed feelings and fears when faced with new challenges.

Positive self-talk and help-seeking strategies

The key to coping with problems or difficult situations is sometimes just in the way we think about them. **Self-talk** is our inner voice, the voice in our mind that says things that we don’t necessarily say out loud. It’s the ‘commentator’ in our head. Self-talk can have a powerful influence on the way we feel about ourselves in certain situations. Your thoughts can directly affect your emotions.

Using positive self-talk in unfamiliar or new situations, such as meeting someone for the first time, can help us feel in control and build our confidence. If you give yourself positive feedback more often, you will likely feel more confident about yourself. You can improve your state of mind by changing your thought patterns. Negative self-talk should be acknowledged and addressed appropriately to improve your self-confidence in situations that you are concerned about. Positive self-talk involves saying things to yourself that are positive while also being realistic. Learn to be compassionate with yourself. Next time you put yourself down, ask yourself this question, ‘Would I say this to a friend?’ If the answer is no, then why are you saying it to yourself?

Self-talk usually happens without us realising. Identifying the negative or irrational thoughts can help to provide confidence to deal with new situations or simply to make us feel better. Positive self-talk can empower you to try new and challenging things and not be afraid of failure.

Effective help-seeking strategies involve being able to go to someone for guidance and assistance when you are worried or have a problem. It is often helpful to talk to people if you have a problem or are feeling unhappy. You generally feel supported, safer and cared for when you share your concerns. It is important to think about the people you would talk to if you needed support in different circumstances. There are two main types of help seeking:

- informal help seeking from family and friends
- formal help seeking from professional sources.
Find the most appropriate person to talk to and express to this person how you are feeling so they can support you effectively.

**Future challenges**

As you go through adolescence and mature into a young adult, the challenges you face will change. You will be expected to make important decisions and take more and more responsibility for your life. As a student, you will be faced with decisions and challenges related to your health and future, such as:

- choosing senior subjects
- balancing social time with study time
- choosing a career path
- studying further at a tertiary institution
- choosing whether or not to be sexually active
- being physically active
- your first job
- learning to drive.

As a young adult, the challenges will be different again, such as:

- moving out of home
- committing to a partner
- coping with further study
- earning a wage to pay the rent, bills and so on
- choosing whether to have children
- making significant purchases, such as a car.

To explore these issues further, complete the **Dealing with future challenges** worksheet in your Resources section.
The decisions you make in the future may provide even greater changes and challenges.

ACTIVITIES

1 Express yourself

Use your creativity to draw, paint, sculpt or act to express all the feelings you have about the challenges of adolescence.

2 Emoticons journal/chart

Before you can deal with your emotions appropriately, you must learn to recognise what causes them.

Develop a journal/chart to record your emotions. You may like to indicate your emotions with the use of an emoticon. Record the activities/events that cause those emotions to occur. Include all the information that will help you determine if there is a pattern to when certain emotions occur. Be sure to also rate each activity/event as high, medium, or low in relation to the intensity of the emotion.

Now, think of some appropriate ways to deal with your emotions.

Or
Life Charge app

You may like to use the Life Charge weblink in your Resources section to journal your emotions.

Life Charge is a simple journaling app that allows you to log positive and negative events throughout the day, while providing each entry with a rating on a 3 point scale. The aim is to provide an easy way for young people to track their day for perspective and reflection.

3 Open communication — top 5

Write a top 5 tip sheet for the fridge door to help your parents to best understand how to communicate with you. The tips need to allow for both yours and your parents’ needs and values. Many web resources are available on this topic. Do a search to find some ideas that best suit your family circumstance. Take your top 5 tips home to negotiate with your parents and put the final list on the fridge as a reminder for all.

4 Identity swap — role play

Find a partner to role play and debate the following statements, with one person playing the role of the teenager and the other playing the role of the parent.

- All mobile phones should be left in a central point in the house when everyone goes to bed.
- Year 7 or 8 students should be allowed to go to whoever’s house they wish.
- Year 7 or 8 students should be permitted to do their homework without supervision.
- Parents should know all of the details of a party prior to giving permission for their child to attend.

Now come up with your own topical and relevant statements to role play and debate.

CHECK & CHALLENGE

Evaluate

1. Identify the challenges young people face when they go from primary school to high school. Describe how you would respond to and cope with these challenges.

Explain
2. Predict and describe at least five challenges that you will face in the future as a young adult.

3. Explain an effective way to develop your family rules.

Elaborate

4. Identify changes that have already occurred in your life. Choose one and describe how you dealt with its challenges.

3.9 Dealing with loss and grief

You will learn that feelings of loss and grief are difficult to deal with and can be quite intense. It may be a very painful experience, particularly if you lose someone you are close to. You may feel many emotions at this time, such as sadness, anger, shock and even loneliness. Everybody copes with the grieving process differently and it is important to recognise and appreciate that everyone needs to deal with it in their own way.

The grieving process can take time. It would be great if there was a magical wand that could make you feel better during these periods, but unfortunately there isn’t. There are things you can do, however, to help you cope more easily. Beyond Blue suggests the following strategies:

- allow yourself time to cry
- take time out
- say goodbye
- talk about it
- stay healthy.

ENGAGE

Have you ever experienced loss? What range of emotions did you feel at the time? The feeling of loss means that something of importance to you is either taken away or no longer accessible to you. Grief is the way you deal with and express your emotion about the loss. There are some things that can make the grieving process a little easier.
EXPLORE

Loss and grief

As we experience change in our lives, we may encounter loss. The death of someone we love or care for is a major loss in our lives. Other losses that many people experience in their lives include:

- the end of a close relationship
- moving away from friends or family
- parents getting divorced
- finding out someone we love is seriously ill
- moving to another country
- moving schools
- losing something that is very important to us, such as our job
- the death of a pet.

A natural response to loss is grief. How we experience grief is different for everyone. Grieving is a healthy process that allows us to fully appreciate the importance of what was lost.

Grieving is a process that happens over a period of time. The length of this time is different for each of us according to individual characteristics, the extent, nature and significance of the loss, and what support we have around us. It is important to understand that not all losses result in negative effects. Moving to a new school, for example, may provide more opportunities, such as better sports facilities, more choice in the school curriculum and new friendships.

Weblinks

- Dealing with loss and grief
- Coping with a family break-up
HEALTH FACT

Ignoring emotional pain will not make it go away, and it is untrue to say that you must feel strong in the face of loss. The healthiest way to deal with loss is to allow yourself to feel the pain the loss has caused, including feeling scared, lonely and sad.

Responding to loss and grief

People can experience a range of emotions when they grieve, such as sadness, disbelief, relief, anger or anguish. Although we will all grieve in our own way, there is a general pattern to the grieving process. At first, you may feel disbelief, shock or confusion and may struggle to accept the loss.

When we experience a major loss, such as when a loved one dies, it may take quite some time for it to sink in. Some people feel at their lowest point three to four months after the loss. This is a time when they need their friends and family to support them and help them get through the pain and confusion. As time passes, the feelings of grief will begin to lessen. There will be good and bad days, but gradually the healing process will start and life will seem much better.

How we respond to loss is often different for boys compared with girls. Cultural differences and gender stereotypes affect the behaviour of boys and girls. Boys are stereotyped into believing that ‘real’ men don’t cry or show their emotions, whereas girls are stereotyped to be emotional. Experiencing an emotional or physical response to grief is normal. It is healthy to allow yourself to grieve because it is the first step in moving on. Can you think of other things you can do to make yourself feel better?

ACTIVITIES

1. Understanding reactions to grief

1. In a group of four, discuss how it would feel and how you might react if:
   a. your favourite pet dies
   b. you and your family emigrate to a country where a different language is spoken
   c. your closest friend moves away.

2. As a group, devise a list of positive strategies other than the ones shown below that would help you cope with the situations proposed in question 1.
3. As a class, draw up a mind map to present all the positive strategies and discuss why they would be helpful for someone experiencing loss.

4. Discuss differences between the ways boys and girls react to loss. Identify reasons why such differences exist.

2 Smiling mind

Smiling mind is a modern meditation tool for young people. It’s a simple tool that gives you a sense of calm, clarity and contentment. Smiling mind is a unique web and app-based program developed by a team of psychologists with expertise in youth and adolescent therapy. (smilingmind.com.au)

Sessions suitable for your age group are available. It gives you the chance to reflect and be aware of your emotions. It can be a helpful tool during difficult times, but it is also very healthy to include into your daily routine.

Some strategies to help you cope with loss

CHECK & CHALLENGE

Explain

1. List five types of experiences that can lead to a reaction of grief.
2. Identify three positive strategies you could adopt to help you cope with loss.
3. Identify three positive strategies you could adopt to support and assist others to cope with loss.

Elaborate

4. Is loss always a negative experience?
Review

What have I learned?

- The time from birth to adolescence is one of rapid growth and development, and a shift from full dependence to seeking independence.
- Puberty is the phase of adolescence characterised by many physical changes. It is when secondary sex characteristics develop in preparation for reproduction.
- Puberty is triggered by the release of hormones.
- The pituitary gland releases the growth hormone. This gland also triggers the female reproductive hormone, oestrogen, and the male reproductive hormone, testosterone.
- One of the major changes for girls during puberty is the start of menstruation. For boys, it is the production of sperm.
- Adolescence is also marked by significant social changes. Adolescents start to seek independence from their parents, and their peer relationships take on a new importance.
- Gender, culture and sexuality are all factors that influence us during adolescence.
- Exploring and expressing sexual feelings is a part of adolescence.
- Making good decisions about whether to engage in sexual activity, knowing your rights and responsibilities in sexual relationships, and taking precautions against unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections will help ensure positive sexual health.
- Peer pressure can be powerful at this time and can cause some adolescents to make poor decisions.
- Learning strategies to handle your emotions during a time of emotional upheaval is important to maintain positive relationships with others.
- Using positive self-talk in unfamiliar or new situations can help us feel in control and build our confidence.
- The time needed to reach emotional maturity will vary among young people. Some signs of emotional maturity include controlling impulses, managing stress, knowing your feelings and why you are experiencing them, and expressing yourself appropriately.
• Girls and boys mature at different rates. Generally, girls tend to mature earlier than boys.
• Physical maturity does not necessarily mean emotional maturity.

CHECK
1. Describe some of the physical, social and emotional changes that young people experience during adolescence.
2. What is the role of hormones during puberty?
3. Describe the menstrual cycle.
4. Explain why young people mature at different rates.
5. Outline the rights and responsibilities people have when they engage in sexual relationships. Why are these important for your health?
6. Identify and explain strategies that can help you deal with the changes and challenges that you will experience during adolescence in a positive way.
7. What advice would you give to someone who is not coping with the changes they are experiencing during adolescence?
8. What future changes and challenges do you expect in your life and how will you deal with them effectively?

ESSENTIAL QUESTION REVIEWED
What are the changes and challenges that occur as you reach puberty and the stage of adolescence? What are some effective strategies to help you navigate a pathway through this time of change?

Evaluate your initial response to the essential question now that you have studied the topic.
ICT activities

Seeking help!

Scenario

Kids Helpline is Australia’s only free, confidential and anonymous telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25. Counsellors respond to more than 10,000 calls each week about issues ranging from relationship breakdown and bullying to sexual abuse, homelessness, suicidal thoughts, and drug and alcohol use. Young people can contact a Kids Helpline counsellor to talk about any issue by calling 1800 55 1800, emailing counsellor@kidshelp.com.au or visiting www.kidshelp.com.au and connecting to web counselling. You have recently completed the extensive training program and are about to begin your first day as a Kids Helpline counsellor.

Your task

Four young people have contacted Kids Helpline by phone, email or online counselling seeking help and advice. Details of their situations have been provided as audio files and transcripts in your ProjectsPLUS Media Centre. Your task is to provide a response to one of these young people. Your aim is to empower them by assisting them to develop options, identify and understand the consequences of a particular course of action, facilitate more productive relationships with family and friends and provide them with information on local support services. Your response should be provided in the form of an email to the young person.
Process

- You may like to begin by completing the **Offering support** interactivity in your Resources section. Take the master class to learn how to provide supportive and empathetic advice to others. This activity will help you prepare for this project.

- Open the ProjectsPLUS application for this chapter in your Resources section. Watch the introductory lesson and then click the ‘Start Project’ button to set up your project. You will provide your responses individually, but you should invite other members of your class to form a project group so you can discuss all four of the cases together in the Research Forum. Save your settings and the project will be launched.

- Start by listening to the audio files of the phone calls, reading the email and observing the web counselling session in the Media Centre. Download and print the transcripts of the phone calls, email and web counselling session. You will also find supporting materials to help you understand the issues covered in these cases. You should download and read these before entering into discussion with your classmates.

- Log in to your Research Forum. The four cases you can respond to have been preloaded as topics to provide a framework for your discussion. Post your ideas about the kinds of advice you should give each of these young people as articles in the Research Forum. You can view and comment on other group members’ articles and rate the information they have posted.
• When the discussion is complete, choose the case you feel most strongly about. This is the person you should respond to in your email.

• Write your email. Remember that you will need to focus on the needs of the young person, and see the world from their perspective. You should outline all of the alternatives available to them and the consequences of each possible course of action. You should also provide information on any other local services that you think might be able to help.

• When your response is complete, print out your Research Report from ProjectsPLUS and hand it in to your teacher with a printed copy of your finished email.
SUGGESTED SOFTWARE

• ProjectsPLUS
• Microsoft Word

MEDIA CENTRE

Your Media Centre contains:

• transcripts of the phone calls, email and web counselling session
• supporting material.