

### In This Chapter

- Setting the Context
- The Mysterious Teenage Mind
- Teenage Relationships

### Setting the Context

- **The term *adolescence***
  - First described by G. Stanley Hall in 1904
  - Stage of life defined as “storm and stress”
  - Recognized as a distinct stage of life In 20th century when going to high school was routine

### History of Adolescence

Approximately 100 years ago, most children left school after sixth or seventh grade to find jobs.

By 1939, 75 percent of all U.S. teens were attending high school.

- Great Depression limited jobs leaving young people with no direction.
- Roosevelt administration implemented a program to encourage young people to attend school; program was a success.

### Development of Adolescence Stage Characteristics

- Due to increased high school attendance, intellectual skills of adolescence increased.
- With recognition of teens as a lucrative market, businesses began targeting the group, thus helping to develop the adolescent culture.
- The 1960s and 1970s led to more baby boomer teens, who rejected conventional rules.

### Stereotypes About Adolescence: True or false?

- T/F 1. Adolescents think about life in deeper, more thoughtful ways than children do.
- T/F 2. Adolescence is when we develop our personal moral code for living.
- T/F 3. Adolescents are highly sensitive to what other people think.
- T/F 4. Adolescents are unusually susceptible to peer influences.
- T/F 5. Adolescents are highly emotional compared to other age groups.
- T/F 6. Adolescents are prone to taking risks.
- T/F 7. Most adolescents are emotionally disturbed.
- T/F 8. Rates of suicide are at their peak during adolescence.
- T/F 9. Adolescents feel more stressed out with their parents than with their peers.
- T/F 10. Getting in with a bad crowd makes it more likely for teenagers to "go down the wrong path."

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### The Mysterious Teenage Mind

- **Three classic theories of teenage thinking**
  - Piaget's formal operational stage
  - Kohlberg's stages of moral judgment
  - Elkind's adolescent egocentrism

## Piaget's Formal Operational Thinking: Abstract Reasoning at Its Peak

- Final stage of cognitive growth (age 12)
  - Can think logically about concepts and hypothetical possibilities
  - Can think abstractly about ideas
  - Can reason like real scientists



Steve McAlister/The Image Bank/Getty Images

## Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Judgment: Developing Internalized Moral Values

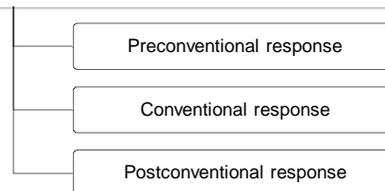
- **Kohlberg**: Capable of developing moral code during adolescence; researched by analyzing responses to moral dilemmas
- **Three levels of moral reasoning**
  - Preconventional level (no internal moral sense)
  - Conventional level (most adults are here)
  - Postconventional level (rarely achieved at any age)

## Formal Operational Stage

- **Reaching formal operations stage means the ability to:**
  - Think hypothetically and scientifically
  - Debate no matter what personal beliefs are
  - Attempt to articulate personal wishes strongly
- **Not all adolescents reach the formal operations stage**
  - It is not universal; occurs mainly in Western cultures

## Kohlberg's Famous Problem: The Heinz Dilemma

A woman is near death from cancer. One drug might save her. The druggist was charging . . . ten times what the drug cost him to make. The . . . husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together half of what it cost. [He] asked the . . . druggist to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said NO! Heinz broke into the man's store to steal the drug . . . Should he have done that? Why?



## Critiquing Kohlberg's Theory

- **Contributions**
  - Awareness raised about values and moral priorities
- **Criticisms**
  - Intrinsic sense of fairness and basic sense of morality begins at a young age.
  - Kohlberg's theory is male-centered (Gilligan)
  - Scale validity questioned; artificial vignettes



Advances in moral reasoning make adolescents highly sensitive to social injustices.

## LEARN THE TERMS

- "Storm and stress"
- Formal operational stage
- Preconventional level of morality
- Conventional level of morality
- Postconventional level of morality

## Elkind's Adolescent Egocentrism: Explaining Teenage Storms

- **Elkind's concept of egocentrism**
  - Developed from Piaget's formal operations
  - Occurs as children begin to see beneath surface of adult rules
  - Attempts to help make sense of teen's emotional states
- **Adolescent egocentrism**
  - Adolescents become aware of the flaws of others
  - Thus becoming obsessed with what others think about their own personal flaws

## Adolescent Egocentrism: Two Facets

### Imaginary audience

- Teens feel as if they are on stage
- Everyone is looking at me and judging me

### Personal fable

- Teens feel as if they are unique and special
- Nothing can hurt me
- This may lead to risky behavior, particularly in males

## Studying Three Aspects of Storm and Stress

### Are adolescents more socially sensitive?

- Research indicates that in emotionally charged situations, teens become more vulnerable to negative peer pressure.
- There is a tendency for immediate gratification over future rewards.



## Developmental Differences in a Go, No Go, Simon Says–like Task

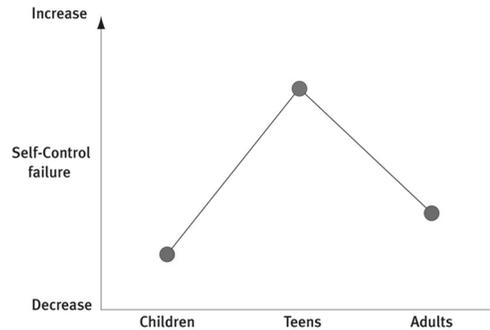


Figure 9.2  
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## Studying Three Aspects of Storm and Stress

### Are adolescents risk takers?

- 1997 2008 research
  - 1 in 6 teens had been arrested by age 18. By 23, arrest rate is 1 in 3.
- Research indicates
  - Most U.S. high school seniors report having sampled alcohol.
  - 2 in 10 report binge drinking (5 or more drinks at one time)
  - Most high school seniors report not using drugs, but this is based on self-report.

## Stereotypes and Surprising Research Facts About Alcohol and Teens

Stereotype #1: Teenagers who drink are prone to abuse alcohol later in life.

Stereotype #2: Involvement in academics and/or athletics protects a teen from abusing alcohol.

Stereotype #3: Middle childhood problems are risk factors for later excessive drinking.

*What do you think?*

### Trends in prevalence of illicit drug use, reported by U.S. high school seniors from the mid-1970s to 2010

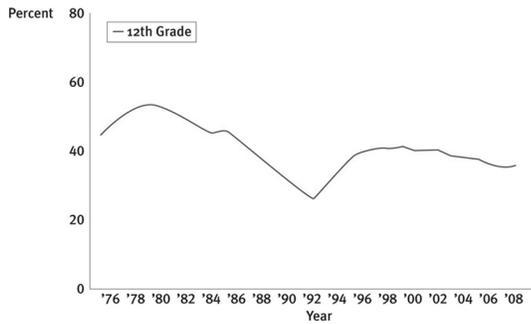


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### Studying Three Aspects of Storm and Stress

- Are adolescents more emotional, more emotionally disturbed, or both?
  - Adolescents live life on an intense emotional plane, shifting from euphoria to deep depression
    - However, teens are not irrational or emotionally disturbed
  - Most teens are typically confident, zestful, and hopeful about the future
    - While most teens are flourishing, about 6 percent reported feeling overwhelmed by life

### Other Consequences of Emotional Storm

- Between 1 in 4 and 1 in 6 young people engage in nonsuicidal self-injury to cope with distress
- Depression rate is significant with women being more susceptible than men
- Risk-taking propensities make late teens peak crime years



Peter Daseley/Photographer's Choice/Getty Images

### Frequency of Arrests By Age in a California Study of Offenders

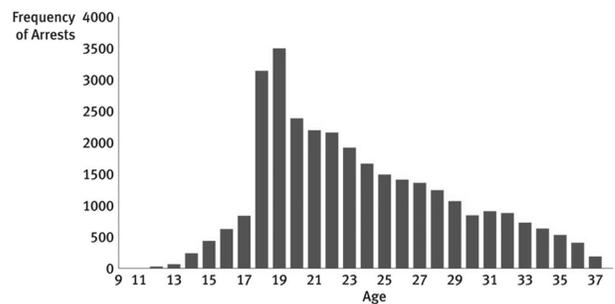


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## LEARN THE TERMS

- Adolescent egocentrism
- Imaginary audience
- Personal fable
- Experience-sampling technique
- Nonsuicidal self-injury

## A Potential Pubertal Problem, Popularity

- **Chasing popularity can have academic costs**
  - Pre-teens often base friendship choices on social status
  - High status group attainment may intensify aggression over time
  - Isolation from in crowd may lead to unhappiness and depression

## Different Teenage Pathways

- **At-risk teens tend to have**
  - Prior emotional regulation difficulties
    - Problems with executive functions
  - Poor family relationships
    - An authoritative discipline style is recommended.
  - Non-nurturing environments
    - School peer hierarchies that promote bullying
    - Living in dangerous neighborhoods

## Different Teenage Pathways

- **Flourishing teens tend to have**
  - Superior executive functions
  - A mentor
  - Close family relationships
  - Prosocial friends
  - Academic success
  - Strong schools and communities rich in nurturing activities
  - A passion or a special talent
  - A strong religious faith and commitment

## Interventions: Making the World Fit the Teenage Mind

Don't punish adolescents as if they were mentally just like adults.

- Focus on rehabilitation.

Don't taint people with a criminal record for minor teenage experimentation.

- Reconsider zero tolerance.

Provide activities that capitalize on adolescents' strengths.

- Encourage youth development programs.

Change high schools to provide a better adolescent environment fit.

- Considering teen sleep patterns and hands-on learning environments.

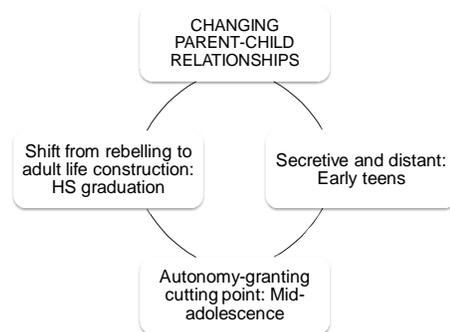
## The Blossoming Teenage Brain

- A dramatic pruning occurs in the frontal lobes.
- Insulating myelin sheath will not reach mature form for many years.
- Certain neurotransmitters are heightened.

## Teenage Relationships

- Teens experience positive feelings during interactions with parents
- While teens' most uplifting moments are with their families, negative emotions outweigh positives 10 to 1
- Most conflicts between teens and parents are based on rules, not basic societal issues such as the state of the world
- Teens feel most upbeat with friends

## The Issue: Pushing for Autonomy



## Cultural Variations on a Theme

- **Immigrant adolescents**
  - Acculturation may be an issue
  - Adolescent parent relationship disagreements may be based on fundamental differences in worldviews
- **Immigrant paradox**
  - Some immigrant adolescents dealing with disadvantages flourish



AP Photo/Lincoln Journal Star, Krista Niles

## LEARN THE TERMS

- Adolescence-limited turmoil
- Life-course difficulties
- Youth development program
- Immigrant paradox

## Connecting in Groups

- **Defining groups by size**
  - **Cliques:** Intimate groups of approximately 6 members with similar attitudes and shared activities
  - **Crowds:** Less intimate larger groups (composed of girls and boys)

## What Is the Purpose of Crowds?

- Teens gravitate toward the crowds that fit their interests and disengage from a crowd when its interests diverge from their own.
- Distinctive crowds ("Goths" or "brains") may be a vehicle for helping teens find their own kind in large anonymous high schools.
- Crowd types in the developed world have amazing similarities.



Why do they dress in this way?

## What Are the Kinds of Crowds?

- In affluent societies, there is consistency in the major crowd categories.
  - Academics:** Brains, nerds, grinds, eggheads
  - Jocks:** Athletes
  - Popular kids:** Hotshots, preppies, elites, princesses
  - Deviants:** Burnouts, dirts, freaks, druggies, potheads,
  - Residual type:** Goths, alternatives, grubs, loners, independents

## Different Emotional Pathways Traveled by Specific High School Crowds

- Kids who end up in different high school crowds move in interesting emotional directions.
- Jocks and popular teens become more confident.
- Brains become less confident than in elementary school.
- Deviants usually remain consistently depressed, from elementary to middle school, leading to gravitating toward bad crowds.

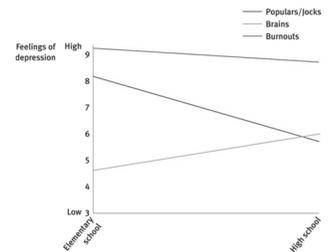


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Feelings of depression in late elementary school and high school, for children who ended up in three different high school crowds.

## Bad Crowds

- Deviancy training:** Socialization of young teenager into delinquency through conversations centered on performance of antisocial acts
- Hostile attributional bias**
  - Reinforced message from antisocial peer groups such as gangs.



Group euphoria

## Society's Nightmare Crowd: Teenage Gangs

- Gangs:** Close-knit delinquent peer group
  - Provide members with status, protection, and income (through criminal activities)
  - Have potential to turn time-limited adolescent turmoil into life-course criminal careers
  - More prevalent in communities where life is dangerous and there are few options for a successful adult life

### Understanding Adolescence Worldwide

- In some impoverished nations, adolescence does not exist.
- According to the United Nations Children's Fund, 1 million children enter the sex trade every year.
- Others are forced to become soldiers (as young as 8 to 10 years old).

### LEARN THE TERMS

- Clique
- Crowd
- Deviancy training
- Gang