

Psychological

Health of Adolescents



Adolescence is a stage in which youths experience a rapid change in their physical, psychological and social development. If they do not know how to deal with conflicts and worries, they may feel at a loss or feel frustrated. Their learning efficiency and interpersonal relationship may also be affected.

In order to enhance your psychological health, you should coordinate your thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviour.

Adolescents should learn to understand and accept themselves, develop harmonious relations with others, and master the skills of emotion and stress management, so as to integrate themselves with the society and hence achieve healthy development both physically and psychologically.

Psychological Features of Adolescents

The rapid psychological, mental and behavioural development of adolescents lead to the following psychological features:

1 Care about self-image

- Adolescents are very conscious of their appearance and inner-self
- Have a high self-esteem, but sometimes their self-confidence is not sufficient and will easily develop a feeling of inferiority
- Tend to imitate certain kinds of people or worship idols in the process of exploring self-identity

2 Seek independence

- Start to question parents' and teacher's authority
- Become rebellious
- Hope to build up their own style

4 Curious about new things, willing to take risks

- Have extensive interests. Curious and adventurous but sometimes become too competitive and impulsive

6 Sentimental and righteous

- Easily influenced
- Emotional, sometimes in high spirit and sometimes depressed



3 Care about peer's recognition

- In order to acquire peer's recognition, they often try to become trendy. Sometimes they would even give up or change some of their previous views, behaviours and standards in order to become similar to their peers, such as becoming materialistic, coveting famous brands, worshipping idols, etc.



5 Full of ideals and illusions

- Pursue fairytale perfection and easily neglect the limitations of real life, resulting in frustration when things do not turn out as they expect

7 Perplexed about sex

- Confused about various sexual developments
- Have fantasies about love and the opposite sex

Stresses Faced by Adolescents

Many things in everyday life could become the sources of stress for adolescents, and they have to deal with them.



Worries about self-image

Tips to help yourself

- Does my puberty start too early or too late
- Do my appearance and figure look good
- Am I inferior to others

- Accept yourself
- A good personality is more important than appearance
- Don't compare with others



Relationship with parents and family members

Tips to help yourself



- How can I improve my relationship with my parents
- How can I get along well with my brothers and sisters

- Take the initiative to communicate with family members
- Gain your parents' trust by using action and time to prove your maturity in handling matters
- Be frank with family members. Accept, understand and care for each other



Academic prospect

Tips to help yourself

- How can I achieve satisfactory academic result
- How to choose between work and further education
- Can I be successful

- Keep exploring effective learning skills, try to overcome difficulties and seek help if necessary
- Understand that academic achievement is not simply represented by marks on examination papers, but includes the experience of the whole learning process
- Have clear learning objectives and personal goals



Worries about friendship and love

Tips to help yourself



- How to make friends with others
- Should I date
- How to attract the opposite sex

- Treat friends with sincerity and honesty
- Participate in group activities more frequently to meet more people and improve your social skills
- Realize the difference between friendship and love

The Road to Healthy Physical and Mental Development

1. Develop self-esteem and self-confidence

Self-esteem is how much you value yourself and self-confidence is the trust in your own ability. Persons with good self-esteem and self-confidence are sure of their own value and strengths and do not fear others knowing their shortcomings. They do not always care about how others regard them. They have their goals and are committed to them. They accept challenges and overcome difficulties.

Method to develop your self-esteem and self-confidence:

- Appreciate your strengths
List out your strengths and achievements and place it somewhere noticeable as an encouragement
- Recognize your value
“All beings are good for something.” Say to yourself positively: “I’m a useful person.”
- Accept yourself
Accept your own appearance and understand that personality is more important than appearance. Establish a self-image that includes inner beauty. You should understand that every person has strengths and weaknesses. Do not expect yourself to be a perfect person. Never lose self-confidence due to inadequacies in certain areas
- Explore your potentials
Open up yourself and participate in different activities in order to know your ability, interest and talent
- Rectify your shortcomings
Respond positively to others’ concern and comments. Rectify your shortcomings proactively
- Avoid comparing with others
Each person is unique. Do not compare with other people. Only compare with your own previous performance and try to improve
- Never fear failures
Learn from failures. Review what can be improved and do better next time
- Establish good interpersonal relationship
Establish good relationship with family members, teachers, schoolmates and friends. Respect and trust each other. Talk to them if you encounter problems and they will give you support and encouragement

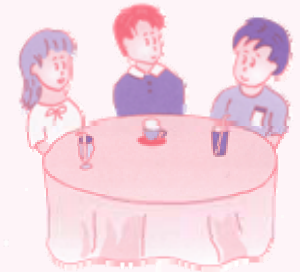
2. Establish good interpersonal relationship



Good interpersonal relationship enables us to get along well with others, win friendship and build up mutual support network.

Interpersonal skills:

- Get to know yourself so as to utilize your strengths and improve your weaknesses
- Listen to others’ sincere comments and ask yourself if you like the company of someone like yourself
- Notice and praise others’ good behaviours
- Be considerate and try to understand the reasons behind others’ behaviours
- Learn to forgive and to apologize
- Be polite, amiable, accessible and ready to help
- Be aware of mood changes, both yours and others’, and express your emotion appropriately
- Maintain a gentle tone and friendly attitude when communicating with others
- Listen actively and be empathetic
- Participate in group activities more frequently and broaden your social circle



3. Control emotions properly

Adolescence is a period of rapid growing development with stronger and quicker emotional fluctuations. If we can perceive, express and manage our emotions appropriately, we can enhance our mental health and interpersonal relationship.

Tips to control emotions:

- Verbalize your feelings and analyze the cause of such feelings objectively, such as “I’m very angry because my schoolmates laughed at my shortness”, “I’m happy because I made progress in my study”, “.....”
- Move away temporarily from the persons or things which have conflicts with you, for example, go to wash your face or drink a glass of water. Calm yourself down first. Then analyze the cause of conflict
- Shift your attention to other things temporarily, or try something relaxing such as listening to music, doing exercises, etc.
- Build up your supporting network. Talk to others proactively. Share your worries with parents, teachers, schoolmates and friends
- Understand that there are always ups and downs in life and open up your feelings
- Open up yourself and develop an optimistic outlook on life. Do not give up hope for the present and future by indulging in the past



4. Learn the skills to relieve stress

Stress exists in our daily life everywhere and is inevitable. In order to avoid the physical and mental health damages caused by excessive or continuous stress, it is essential to take proper preventive and relief methods.

Preventing stress:

- Understand and accept yourself
Appreciate your strengths and admit your weaknesses
Set reasonable expectation and achievable goals according to your capabilities
- Manage time properly
Handle things gradually and step by step. Avoid hasty actions
- Try your best. Do not worry unnecessarily
- Keep a healthy body and mind
Maintain a balanced diet, have sufficient sleep, keep regular hours, do appropriate amount of exercise, develop healthy hobbies, make good use of leisure time and be optimistic
- Broaden your horizon, be well-equipped
Read more books, pay more attention to things around you, and listen to others' experiences and opinions so as to enhance your skills and resources to solve problems
- Establish good interpersonal relationship
Communicate with others proactively and strengthen your support network



Relieving stress:

- Forget your frustration temporarily and engage in some leisure activities, such as sports, listening to music, painting, etc.
- Talk to people proactively
- Find out the source of stress. Try different practical solutions and face your problem proactively and optimistically

Please Remember

- Avoiding the problem is not a solution. It will only make stress accumulate and thus prolonging your misery and worries
- Smoking, drinking, drug abuse, etc. can only bring temporary relief without solving the problem. On the contrary, they will harm your body and your family; thus worsening the problem
- Committing suicide or self-mutilation cannot solve your problem. This pessimistic means will hurt the people who care about you. Do take care of yourself and treasure your life. All problems have a way out
- When family members, teachers and friends cannot help, you should consult professionals like medical personnel, social worker or clinical psychologist

Counselling Hotline Services

Mutual Aid Helpline 187 8668
Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Link with over 270 social service hotlines
and enquiry telephones
Target group: general public

The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association
"Children's hotline" 2520 6800
Mon-Fri 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Sat 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Hong Kong Young Women's Christian
Association
Counselling Hotline 2711 6622
Mon-Fri 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
(except public holidays)

The Hong Kong Federation of
Youth Groups
"Youthline" 2777 8899
Mon to Sat 2:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Breakthrough Counselling Centre
Counselling Service 2377 8511
(Make appointment for counselling)
Mon, Fri 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Wed, Thu 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Hong Kong Christian Service
Centre for PS33 Psychotropic
Substance Abusers 2368 8269
Mon-Fri 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Mon 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Caritas HUGS Centre
Counselling Hotline for Young Psychotropic
Substance Abusers 2466 3132
Mon-Fri 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sat 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Target Group: Young psychotropic
substance abusers and their family

The Samaritan Befrienders HK
Emotion Counselling Hotline 2389 2222
24 hours

Youth Outreach 9088 1023
24 hours

Please consult respective organizations for the most up-dated information.