

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

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Paper Title: Developmental Psychology

Unit: Unit IV – Emotional and Social Development

Module Name: Adolescence: Peer relations, dating and romantic relationships

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Notes:

Peers:

- Peers play powerful roles in the lives of adolescents.
- Peer relations undergo important changes in adolescence, including changes in friendships and in peer groups and the beginning of romantic relationships.

Friendships:

- For most children, being popular with their peers is a strong motivator.
- In early adolescence, teenagers prefer to have a smaller number of friendships that are more intense and intimate than those of young children.
- Harry Sullivan (1953) was the most influential theorist to discuss the importance of adolescent friendships.
- Sullivan- friends become increasingly important in meeting social needs.
- The need for intimacy intensifies during early adolescence, motivating teenagers to seek out close friends.
- If adolescents failed to develop such close friendships, they experience loneliness and reduced a sense of self-worth.
- Adolescents disclose intimate and personal information to their friends more often than do younger children.

- Adolescents also say they depend more on friends than on parents to satisfy their needs for companionship, reassurance of worth and intimacy.
- The ups and downs of experiences with friends, shape adolescents' well-being.
- Gossip about peers often dominate the conversation of friends in adolescence.
- Much of the gossip is characterized by negative comments about others.
- The negative gossip takes the form of relational aggression, which involves spreading false rumors to harm someone.
- However, not all gossip among friends is negative.
- Some gossip can involve collaborative constructions that contributes to developing perspectives on intimacy and close relationships.
- Friends can also can show their trust by disclosing risky opinions.
- The talk-featured, gossip aspect of friendship is more common in girls than boys.
- Although most adolescents develop friendships with individuals who are close to their own age, some adolescents become best friends with younger or older individuals.
- Adolescents who interact with older youth do engage in more problem behaviours, such as delinquency and early sexual behaviour.

Peer groups:

- The standards of peer groups and the influence of crowds and cliques become increasingly important during adolescence.

Peer pressure:

- Young adolescents conform more to peer standards than children do.
- Around the 8th & 9th grades, conformity to peers, to their anti-social standards peaks.
- Adolescents who are uncertain about their social identity, have low self-esteem and high social anxiety, are most likely to conform when they are in the presence of someone, they perceive to have higher status than they do.

Cliques and crowds:

- These assume more important roles in the lives of adolescents than in children.
- Cliques are small groups that range from 2 to about 12 individuals and average to about 5-6 individuals.
- The clique members are usually of the same sex and about the same age.
- Some cliques form because of friendship.
- In the high school years, friendships become more heterosexual.

Dating and romantic relationships:

- Adolescents spend considerable time either dating or thinking about dating.
- Dating can be a form of recreation, a source of status.
- A setting for learning about close relationships as well a way of finding a mate.
- Developmental changes in dating and romantic relationships: three stages characterize the development of relationships in adolescence.
- Entry into romantic attractions and affiliations at about 11-13 years of age
- This initial stage is triggered by puberty.
- From 11-13, adolescents become intensely interested in romance and it dominates many conversations with same-sex friends.
- These mixed –sex friendships can provide adolescents engage in similar activities, such as being in a club or a sports team.
- Some cliques also form because of friendships, they can spend time with each other, share mutual interests and enjoy each other's company.

Crowds:

- These groups are larger than cliques and less personal.
- Adolescents are usually members of a crowd based on reputation and they may or may not spend much time together.
- Many crowds are defined by the activities an adolescent engages in.
- Reputation-based crowds often appear for the first time in adolescents, and usually become less prominent in late adolescence.

- Developing a crush on someone is common and the crush often is shared with a same-sex friend. Young adolescents may or may not interact with the individual who is the object of their infatuation.
- When dating occurs, it usually in a group setting.
- Exploring romantic relationships at approximately 14-16 years of age.
- At this point in adolescence, two types of romantic involvement occur.
- Casual dating emerges between individuals who are mutually attracted. These dating experiences are short-lived, last a few months and usually only endure for a few weeks.
- These bonds are often more stable and enduring.
- Two variations on these stages in the development of romantic relationships in adolescence involve early and late bloomers.
- Early bloomers include 15-20% of 11–13-year-olds who say that they currently are in a romantic relationship.
- Late bloomers comprise approximately 10% of 17–19-year-olds who say that they have had no experience with romantic relationships.
- Another 15% who report that they have not engaged in any romantic relationships that lasted more than 4 months.

Dating in gay and lesbian youth:

- Most gay and lesbian youth have some same-sex sexual experience, often with peers who are "experimenting".
- Some gay and lesbian youth continue in the same-sex orientation while others have a primarily heterosexual orientation.
- In one study, gay and lesbian youth related the breakup of a current romance as their second most stressful problem, second only to disclosure of their sexual orientation to their parents.

Socio-cultural contexts and dating:

- The socio-cultural context exerts a powerful influence on adolescents' dating patterns.
- Values, religious beliefs and traditions often dictate the age at which dating begins.
- How much freedom in dating is allowed?

- Whether dates must be supervised by adults or parents and the role of males and females in dating.
- Dating may become a source of conflict with a family if the parents have immigrated from cultures in which dating begins at a late age, little freedom in dating is allowed.
- Dates are supervised and adolescent girl dating is especially restricted.

Dating and adjustment:

- The more romantic experiences, the adolescent had, the higher their levels of social acceptance, friendship competence and romantic competence was.
- More romantic experiences also were linked to a higher level of substance use, delinquency and sexual behaviour.
- Dating and romantic relationship at an early age can be especially problematic. Researchers have found that early dating and 'going with' someone are linked with adolescent pregnancy and problems at home and at school.