



# Adolescent Behavior

What to expect during your child's middle school years

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# Adolescence is a time of change!

- Physical Change
- Intellectual Development
- Emotional Development
- Social Development

# Physical/Intellectual Change

- Physical
  - Limbs may be out of proportion
  - Puberty and hormones
- Intellectual
  - Brain not fully developed (rational thinking)
  - Strong sense of what's fair
  - Beginning to think more abstractly

# Emotional Development

- Not a kid-----Not an adult
- Conscious of the physical changes
- Wants to be like everyone else
  - Do not want to be singled out as different

# Social Development

- Peers are an increasingly influential group in the lives of early adolescents
- Will go to great lengths to be part of the group
  - The behavior of the group may even be completely opposite of the normal behavior of the youngster

# Social Development

- Gifted students may go to extremes to become “average”
- Girl groups tend to be even numbered (so it is possible to pair up)
- Boy groups tend to be interest based (sports, video games, etc.)

# Vulnerable Time

- Want to be part of group
- Poor at predicting consequences
- Do not want to be embarrassed or singled out
  - More likely to be cruel to those outside of peer group to maintain standing in the group
  - More likely to internalize criticism

# Drama, Drama, Drama

- With adolescents there's drama
  - Boys and Girls
- Listen
- Hold your child accountable for their behavior/involvement
- Attempt to defuse, don't get caught up
- If it becomes serious seek help



# Hang In There!

- Young adolescents want caring adults
- They want to feel important
- They want to make a difference
- They often recognize the effect of others on their behavior
- They feel good about themselves when someone does something nice for them or they do nice things for others
- They want to communicate openly with adults

## Survival Tips

- Keep the lines of communication open
- Monitor the number of activities
- Know your child's friends
- Recognize the quest for independence
- Support your child through failures
- Celebrate your child's successes
- Seek to be the parent, not a friend
- Make sure they know how to be safe
- Talk to other parents

# Warning Signs

- Persistent and extreme
  - Change in sleeping patterns
  - Increase or decrease in appetite
  - Change of friends
  - Withdrawal, isolation
  - Drop in grades

# School-Based Support

- Counselor – Mrs. Jen Gornik
- Social Worker – Ms. Milissa Riley
- Your child's Team Leader
- Classroom teachers
- Principal