

# ADOLESCENCE



**DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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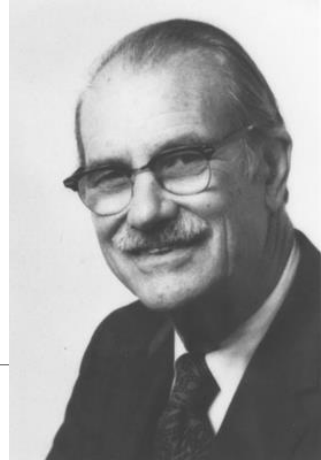
# Adolescence

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- physical and mental development, sexual maturation, social learning in the broadest sense
  - social milestones of adulthood in contemporary Euro-American society go far beyond puberty
1. early adolescence (10/11 - 13): dominated by biological and physiological changes
  2. middle adolescence (14-16): psychologically a period of searching for one's own identity, uniqueness and authenticity
  3. late adolescence (+/-17 and more): most explicitly moving towards adulthood, goals, partner relationships.

# Developmental tasks (Havighurst)

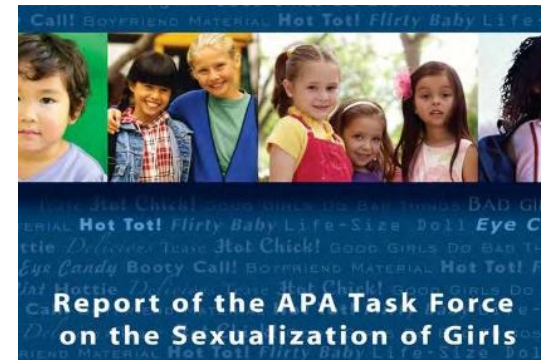
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- ❑ acceptance
- ❑ **apply intellectual potential**
- ❑ application of emotional and cognitive potential in relationships
- ❑ **mutual respect and cooperation** replaces emotional dependence
- ❑ gaining an idea of **economic independence**
- ❑ **preparing for partnership** and family life
- ❑ **socially responsible behavior**
- ❑ important personal goals and lifestyles
- ❑ **hierarchy of values, world view**

# Biological changes

- ❑ development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics and accelerated growth
- ❑ metabolic theory of adolescence; "secular acceleration"
- ❑ changes are perceived and evaluated by the environment (peers, parents, media and fashion)
- ❑ girls perceive puberty as a more "restrictive intervention" in their lives
- ❑ earlier puberty is more advantageous for boys than for girls, boys perceive changes mostly positively
- ❑ Related topics: physiological balance, sex/gender roles, body schema
- ❑ sleep pattern changes – sleep phase delay
- ❑ prefrontal cortex maturation (completed at 25) - ability to plan and think about the consequences of actions, solve problems and control impulses



Note: Faces have been blurred to mask the identity of the females and males in the images.



# Cognitive changes

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- ❑ the period of formal operations - > ability for abstract thought (overestimation)
- ❑ impression that all problems are easily solved; adolescents can already speculate what the world **could or should be**
- ❑ increased ability to produce alternative solutions -> e.g. higher **doubts**
- ❑ paradox: increase in cognitive capacity, performance may decline because one is **unfocused**
- ❑ increased self-awareness and **introspection**
- ❑ perception of **time** changes, including in relation to the self -> reflections on the **future** create a need for security and safety
- ❑ a certain **egocentricity** is reinforced, which can be manifested by hypercriticality (both of oneself and of the environment), relativism.



# Emotional development



- ❑ emotional experiences differentiate
- ❑ higher emotions (intellectual, aesthetic, moral, social), erotic feelings
- ❑ **emotional lability** - related to hormonal changes, increased egocentrism, a sense of identity crisis, secondary conflicts, enthusiasm for ideals.
- ❑ increased fatigability, apathy alternating with phases of increased activity, impulsivity
- ❑ middle and late adolescence is a period of fading moodiness and lability
- ❑ changes in cognitive and emotional processes interact with changes in social relationships ->

# Social changes



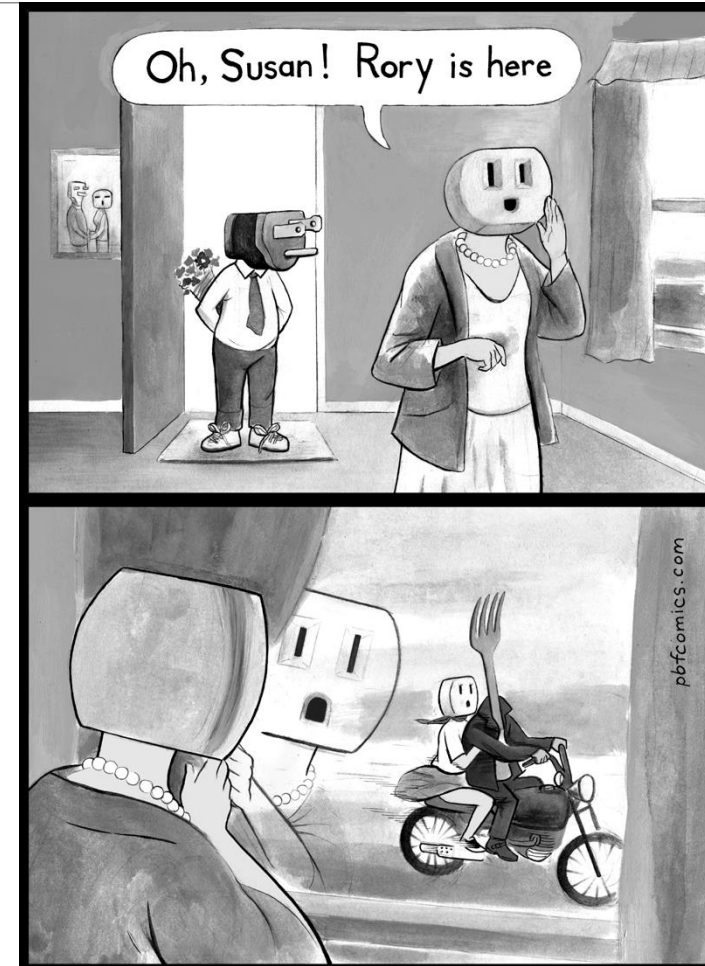
- ❑ increased self-reflection, self-concept changes
- ❑ risk of „developmental“ hypochondria or dysmorphophobia or even a disorder (mental anorexia)
- ❑ peer **conformity** is highest in early and middle adolescence
- ❑ development of communication skills = development of relationships
  - ❑ reduces internal tension and aggression
  - ❑ increases self-confidence, emotional support, prestige, sense of self-worth (especially in peer group)

An important task is the **emancipation from the family** - conflict: parents seek to maintain influence and authority; adolescents seek greater autonomy and symmetry (with authority figures in general)



# Romantic relationships

- ❑ awareness of one's own sexuality, the first relationships usually begin at puberty
- ❑ platonic nature of first loves
- ❑ socially determined gender roles
- ❑ gradually increasing experience and "real" partner, role motives;
- ❑ important experience for the development of emotionality
- ❑ later relationships become more stable and long-term
- ❑ adolescence is usually the first time that a different sexual identity, preference or orientation ('coming out') becomes apparent, which can be a challenging moment
- ❑ interplay between attachment, sensuality and sexuality





## How is it relevant for teaching?

- Early adolescence (puberty) – foster peer interactions, help resolve conflicts, extra alert: exclusion, conformity (e.g. self-harm as a trend), self-esteem issues.
- Expect: fatigue (sleep pattern shifts), changes in appetite, emotional lability and difficulties of physical changes - address it with compassion and normalize their difficulties as understandable, expected and transient!
- Late adolescence – self-esteem issues continue, introduce variety of situations student's can experience themselves in; foster introspection and consider mental health issues (anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, worry about future, nature – environmental grief, meaning of life)
- As in any age, make your materials relevant: know interests of your students, now when you can introduce more abstract, hypothetical conversations and address identity and life issues.



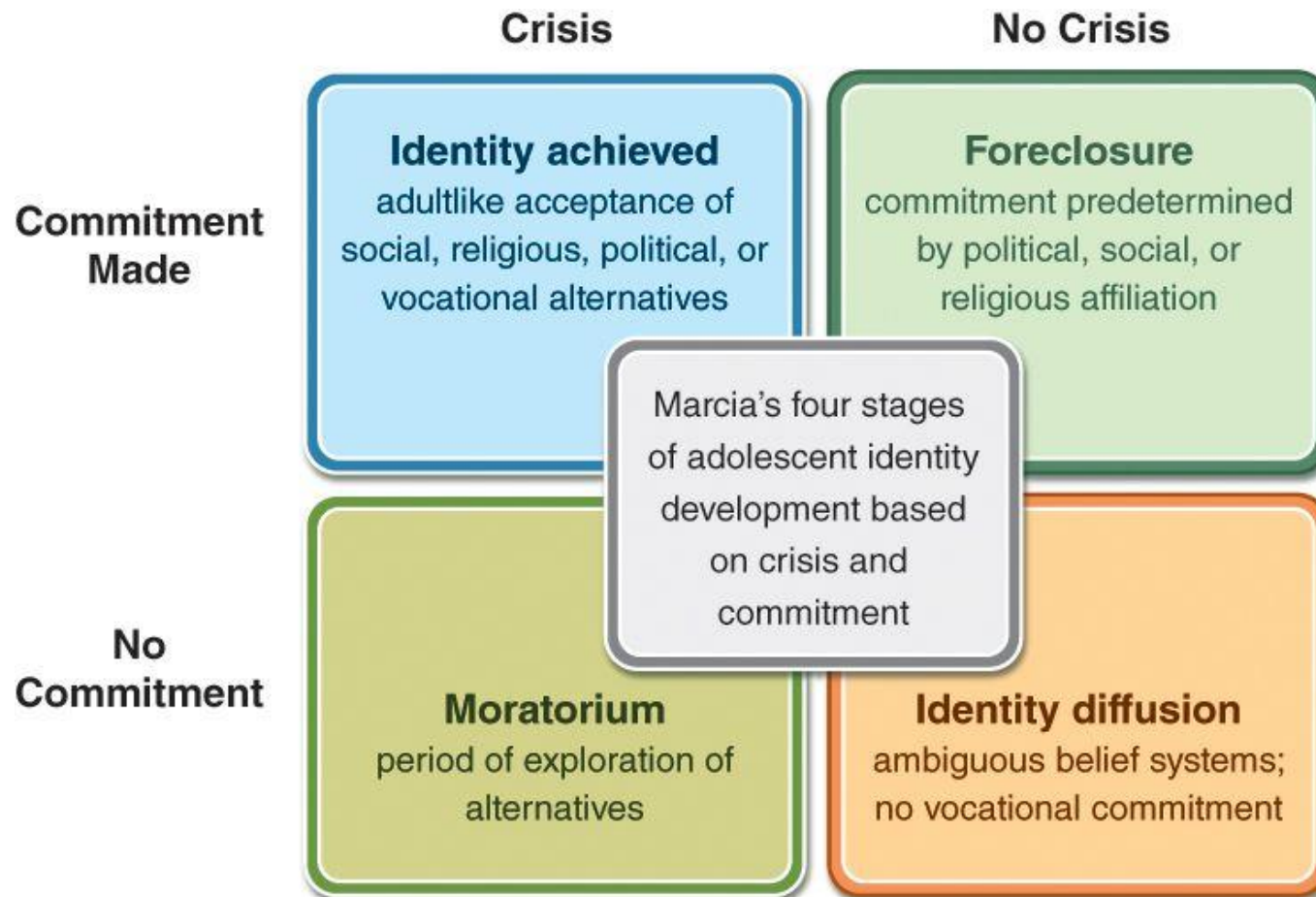
# Individuation

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- ❑ **psychological differentiation:** awareness of difference from others, cognitive performance "outpaces" emotional capacity, generalization of negative attitudes may occur
- ❑ **testing and experimentation** (14-15 years): challenging authority, increasing responsibility towards peers
- ❑ **establishing friendships** (16-17): renewed ties with parents, authority selectively accepted, importance of close friendship and erotic relationships
- ❑ **consolidation of the relationship with oneself** (late adolescence), based on a sense of one's own autonomy and uniqueness

# Identity achievement states - James Marcia

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# Emerging adulthood

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- ❑ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (2000)
- ❑ the life stage between adolescence and adulthood, the period between 18 and 29
- ❑ most people in this stage say they are not yet fully grown - "yes in some ways, no in others"
- ❑ determined socio-culturally, by the influence of certain social,
- ❑ demographic changes have delayed the time of first marriage, conception of a child
- ❑ substantial variability in how emerging adulthood is experienced across OECD countries.
- ❑ Europe is the region where emerging adulthood is longest and most leisurely. The median ages for entering marriage and parenthood are near 30 in most European countries
- ❑ Housing affordability has been linked to home ownership rates, and demographic researchers have argued for a link between the rising age at first marriage and the rising age of first home ownership

# Goal of the socialization process: mature personality

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- ❖ adequate perception of reality
- ❖ the ability for correct self-assessment and self-knowledge
- ❖ a sense of "identity" (I am me)
- ❖ ability to self-control and self-regulate
- ❖ realistic self-esteem and self-acceptance
- ❖ capacity for self-actualisation
- ❖ autonomy
- ❖ resilience to stress (frustration tolerance)
- ❖ active adaptation
- ❖ liveliness

