



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH

Adolescent Development Explained: Social Connections

Webinar

Wednesday, September 25, 2019



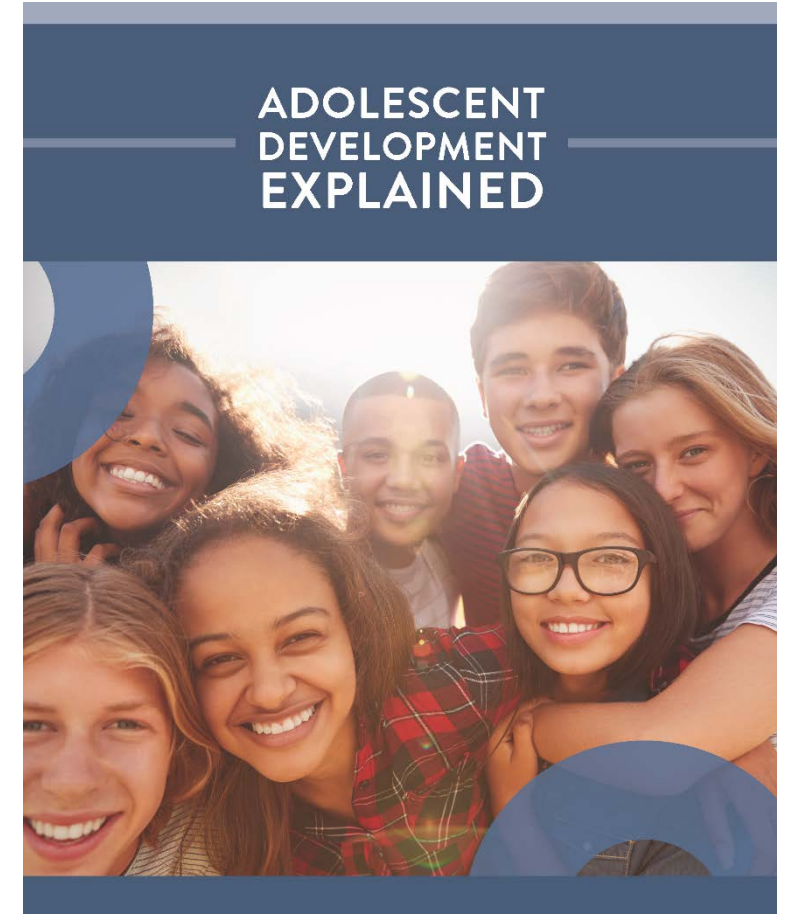
Welcome

- **Diane Foley, M.D., FAAP**, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Population Affairs
- Speakers:
 - **Terrinieka W. Powell, Ph.D.**, associate professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and core faculty at the Johns Hopkins Center for Adolescent Health
 - **Monica Longmore, Ph.D.**, social psychologist and professor of Sociology at Bowling Green State University



Adolescent Development Explained

- Adolescence is a time of enormous transition.
- This resource discusses changes that are normal and necessary in adolescence, different ways adolescents experience these changes, and how adults can support healthy development.
- It builds on *The Teen Years Explained: A Guide to Healthy Adolescent Development*, developed by the Center for Adolescent Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.



Pre-Webinar Question: What questions do you have about social relationships in adolescence?



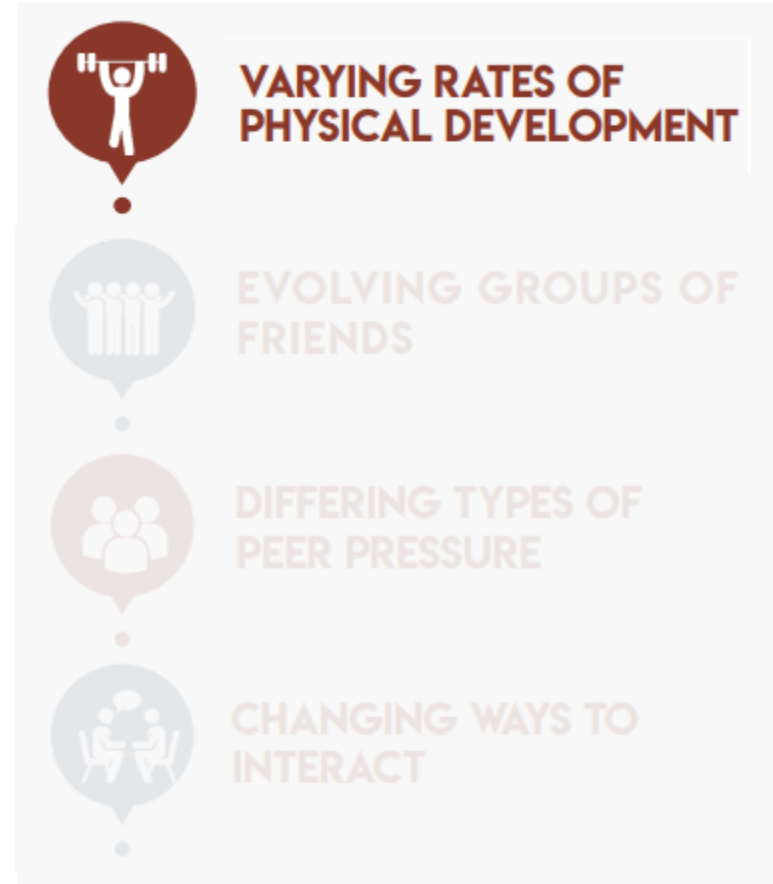
SECTION 1: Taking on the Social Roles of Adulthood

- **Social development** is a process that helps adolescents move from the limited roles of childhood to the broader roles of adulthood.
- Adolescents expand their social roles when they join a school club or get a summer job. Adolescents may also become interested in dating.



Factors that Can Affect Social Development

- **Physical changes** may seem to signal that an adolescent may be entrusted with greater responsibilities, but that may be the least reliable way to determine what roles they can handle.
- **Cognitive and emotional development** help adolescents have deeper conversations and express their emotions better.



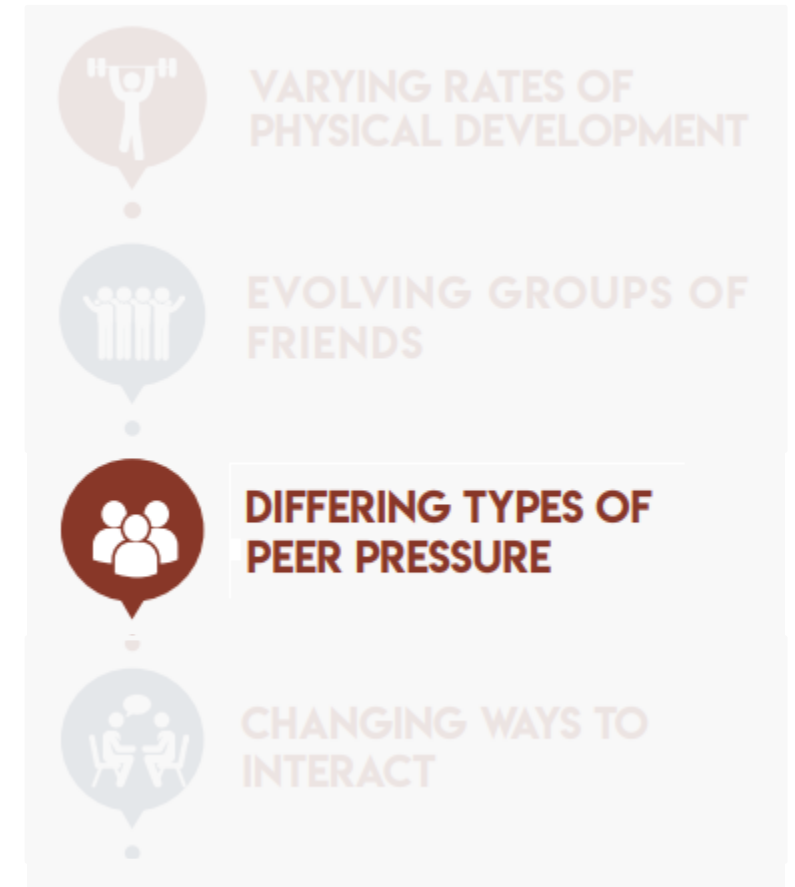
SECTION 2: Building New Social Connections

- By expanding **social circles**, adolescents build social networks and form stronger relationships.
- Acceptance from peers is especially important to adolescents. They may change how they think, speak, dress, or behave to gain approval from **evolving friend groups**.
 - Sometimes adolescents engage in **risky behaviors**, including sexual activity and substance use, because they think it will earn them greater acceptance from peers.



Negative and Positive Peer Pressure

- Peer pressure can take the form of encouragement, requests, challenges, threats, or insults.
- Positive peer groups can help youth learn and practice **healthy relationship skills**, such as cooperating, resolving conflicts, and sharing.



Navigating Romantic Relationships

- Exploring romantic relationships may be considered the **hallmark of adolescence**.
- Youth in relationships are still developing their sense of self and learning about their likes, dislikes, and values.
- Youth who date may engage in risky behaviors, such as having sex at an early age, or find themselves in unhealthy or violent dating relationships.
- Adolescents may also have unrealistic expectations or ideas about relationships from media or friends.



SECTION 3: New Ways to Interact

- **Ways to interact** are changing with technology.
 - Text messaging, social networking platforms, blogs, email, and instant messaging all can be important tools for youth interactions.
- It is not uncommon for youth to have virtual friendships with peers they have never met face-to-face.
- It is important for adults to help adolescents navigate in-person interactions and to monitor social media use.



Social Media Use in Adolescence

- **Social media** presents many risks and benefits:
 - Curtails nonverbal communication and cues
 - Is another forum for bullying
 - Helps adolescents stay connected
 - Provides a platform for adolescents to express who they are
- Adults should help adolescents think deeply about what they post on social media and set up boundaries for social media use.



SECTION 4: How Parents and Caring Adults Can Help

- Set examples of healthy relationships.
- Monitor and get to know adolescents' friends and dating partners.
- Encourage participation in activities adolescents care about.
- Exhibit empathetic behavior.
- Build connections by talking to adolescents about your interests and learn about theirs.
- Teach adolescents how to deal with peer pressure.



Tips for Talking with Adolescents

- Acknowledge what adolescents have to say.
- Let adolescents know when it is important to share sensitive information with you.
- Discuss boundaries and expectations in relationships with others.
- Set online boundaries.
- Teach and model good communication skills.



Questions?

For more information about Adolescent Development Explained:

<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/explained/index.html>

Recordings and slides are coming soon:

<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-training/multimedia/videos/index.html>

